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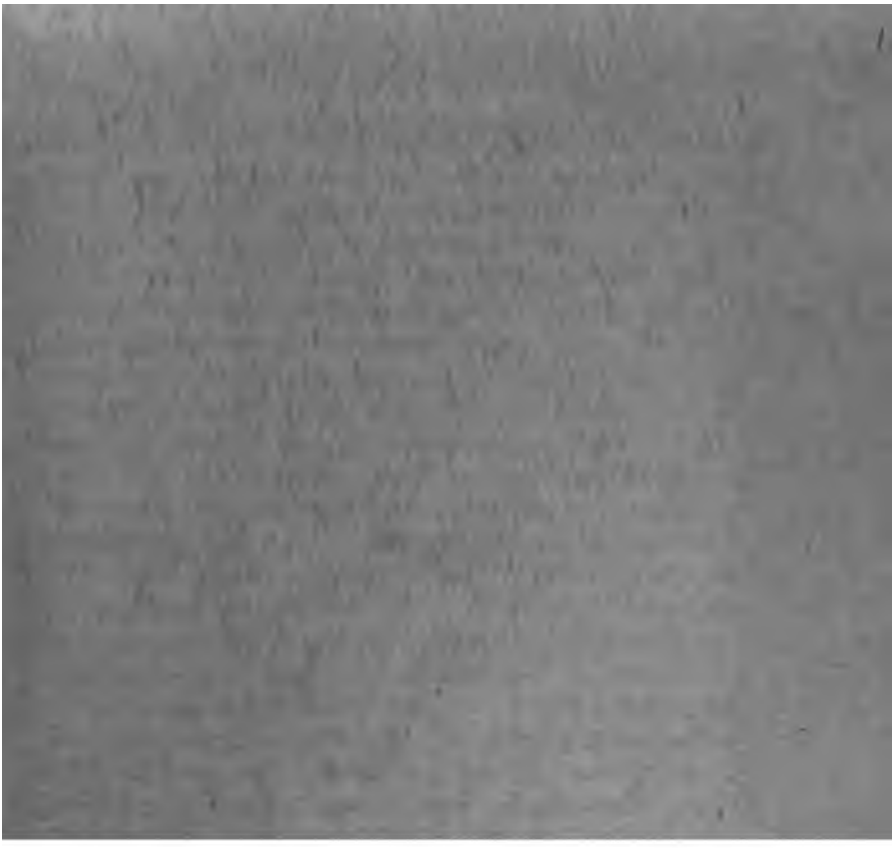

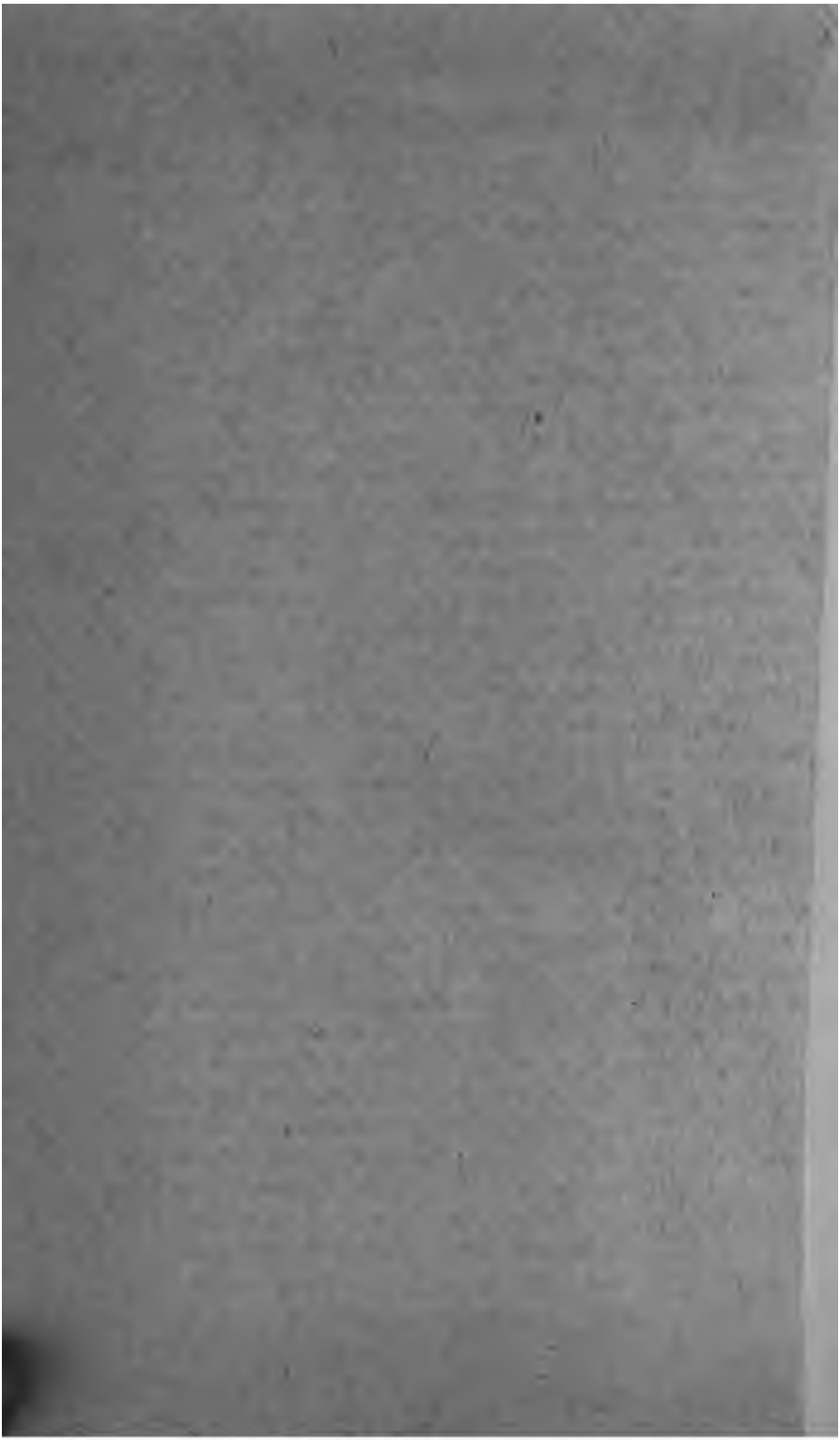

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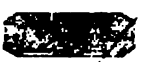
THIS COPY IS NUMBER 

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Clarissa to Miss Howe.—Lovelace, she says, complains of the reserve he gives occasion for. His pride a dirty low pride, which has eaten up his prudence. He is sunk in her opinion. An afflicting letter sent her from her cousin Morden.

Encloses the letter. In which her cousin (swayed by the representations of her brother) pleads in behalf of Solmes, and the family-views; and sets before her, in strong and just lights, the character of a libertine.

Her heavy reflections upon the contents. Her generous prayer . 490—500

LETTER XCVII.

Clarissa to Miss Howe.—He presses her to go abroad with him; yet mentions not the ceremony that should give propriety to his urgency. Cannot bear the life she lives. Wishes her uncle Harlowe to be sounded by Mr. Hickman, as to a reconciliation. Mennell introduced to her. Will not take another step with Lovelace till she know the success of the proposed application to her uncle.

Substance of two letters from Lovelace to Belford; in which he tells him who Mennell is, and gives an account of many new contrivances and precautions. Women's pockets ballast-bags. Mrs. Sinclair's wardrobe. Good order observed in her house. The lady's caution, he says, warrants his contrivances . . . . 501—508

THE HISTORY

OF

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

—o—

LETTER I.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Tuesday Evening, and continued through the night.

WELL, my dear, I am alive, and here! but how long I shall be either here, or alive, I cannot say. I have a vast deal to write; and perhaps shall have little time for it. Nevertheless, I must tell you how the saucy Betty again discomposed me, when she came up with this Solmes's message; although, as you will remember from my last, I was in a way before that wanted no additional surprises.

Miss! Miss! Miss! cried she, as fast as she could speak, with her arms spread abroad, and all her fingers distended, and held up, will you be pleased to walk down into your own parlour?—There is everybody, I will assure you, in full *congregation!*—And there is Mr. Solmes, as fine as a lord, with a charming white peruke, fine laced shirt and ruffles, coat trimmed with silver, and a waistcoat standing an end with lace!—Quite handsome, believe me!—You never saw such an alteration!—Ah! Miss, shaking her head, 'tis pity you have said so much against him! but you know how to come off for all that!—I hope it will not be too late!

Impertinence! said I—Wert thou bid to come up in this fluttering away?—and I took up my fan, and fanned myself.

Bless me! said she, how soon these fine young ladies will be put into *flusterations!*—I mean not either to offend or frighten you, I am sure.—

Everybody there, do you say?—Who do you call everybody?

Why, Miss, holding out her left palm opened, and with a flourish, and a saucy leer, patting it with the forefinger of the other at every mentioned person, there is your papa!—there is your mamma!—there is your uncle Harlowe!—there is your uncle Antony!—your aunt Hervey!—*my* young lady!—and my young master!—and Mr. Solmes, with the air of a great courtier, standing up, because he named you:—Mrs. Betty, said he [then the ape of a wench bowed and scraped as awkwardly as I suppose the person did whom she endeavoured to imitate], pray give my humble service to Miss, and tell her I wait her commands.

Was not this a wicked wench?—I trembled so I could hardly stand. I was spiteful enough to say that her young mistress, I supposed, bid her put on these airs, to frighten me out of a capacity of behaving so calmly as should procure me my uncles' compassion.

What a way do you put yourself in, Miss, said the insolent!—Come, dear Madam, taking up my fan, which I had laid down, and approaching me with it, fanning, shall I——

None of thy impertinence!—But say you *all* my friends are below with him? And am I to *appear* before them *all?*

I can't tell if they'll stay when you come. I think they seemed to be moving when Mr. Solmes gave me his orders. But what answer shall I carry to the 'squire?

Say, I can't go!—but yet when 'tis over, 'tis over!—Say, I'll wait upon—I'll attend—I'll come presently—say anything; I care not what—but give me my fan, and fetch me a glass of water.

She went, and I fanned myself all the time; for I was in a flame: and hemmed, and struggled with myself all I

could; and when she returned drank my water; and finding no hope presently of a quieter heart, I sent her down, and followed her with precipitation; trembling so, that had I not hurried, I question if I could have got down at all.—Oh, my dear, what a poor, passive machine is the body when the mind is disordered.

There are two doors to *my* parlour, as I used to call it. As I entered at one, my friends hurried out at the other. I just saw the gown of my sister, the last who slid away. My uncle Antony went out with them: but he stayed not long, as you shall hear; and they all remained in the next parlour, a wainscot partition only parting the two. I remember them both in one: but they were separated in favour of us girls, for each to receive her visitors in at her pleasure.

Mr. Solmes approached me as soon as I entered, cringing to the ground, a visible confusion in every feature of his face. After half a dozen choked-up Madams,—he was very sorry—he was very much concerned—it was his misfortune—and there he stopped, being unable presently to complete a sentence.

This gave me a little more presence of mind. Cowardice in a foe begets courage in one's self—I see that plainly now—yet perhaps at bottom the new-made bravo is a greater coward than the other.

I turned from him, and seated myself in one of the fireside chairs, fanning myself. I have since recollected that I must have looked very saucily. Could I have had any *thoughts* of the man, I should have despised myself for it. But what can be said in the case of an aversion so perfectly sincere?

He hemmed five or six times, as I had done above; and these produced a sentence—that I could not but see his confusion. This sentence produced two or three more. I believe my aunt had been his tutoress; for it was his awe, his reverence for so superlative a lady [I assure you!]. And he hoped—he hoped—three times he hoped, before he told me what—at last it came out, that I was too generous

(generosity, he said, was my character) to despise him for such—for such—for such *true* tokens of his love.

I do indeed see you under some confusion, sir; and this gives me hope that although I have been compelled, as I may call it, to give way to this interview, it may be attended with happier effects than I had apprehended from it.

He had hemmed himself into more courage.

You could not, Madam, imagine any creature so blind to your merits, and so little attracted by them, as easily to forego the interest and approbation he was honoured with by your worthy family, while he had any hope given him that one day he might, by his perseverance and zeal, expect your favour.

I am but too much aware, sir, that it is upon the interest and approbation you mention, that you build such hope. It is impossible otherwise that a man who has any regard for his *own* happiness, would persevere against such declarations as I have made, and think myself obliged to make, in justice to you, as well as to myself.

He had seen many instances, he told me, and had heard of more, where ladies had seemed as averse, and yet had been induced, some by motives of compassion, others by persuasion of friends, to change their minds; and had been very happy afterwards: and he hoped this might be the case here.

I have no notion, sir, of compliment, in an article of such importance as this: yet I am sorry to be obliged to speak my mind so plainly as I am going to do.—Know then, that I have invincible objections, sir, to your address. I have avowed them with an earnestness that I believe is without example: and why?—because I believe it is without example that any young creature, circumstanced as I am, was ever treated as I have been treated on your account.

It is hoped, madam, that your consent may in time be obtained—*that* is the hope; and I shall be a miserable man if it cannot.

Better, sir, give me leave to say, you were miserable by yourself, than that you should make two so.

You may have heard, madam, things to my disadvantage. No man is without enemies. Be pleased to let me know *what* you have heard, and I will either own my faults, and amend; or I will convince you that I am basely *bespattered:* and once I understand you overheard something that I should say that gave you offence: unguardedly, perhaps; but nothing but what showed my value, and that I would persist so long as I could have hope.

I have indeed heard many things to your disadvantage —and I was far from being pleased with what I overheard fall from your lips: but as you were not anything to me. and never could be, it was not for me to be concerned about the one or the other.

I am sorry, madam, to hear this. I am sure you should not tell me of any fault that I would be unwilling to correct in myself.

Then, sir, correct *this* fault—do not wish to have a young creature compelled in the most material article of her life, for the sake of motives she despises; and in behalf of a person she cannot value: one that has, in her own right, sufficient to set her above all your offers, and a spirit that craves no more than what it *has,* to make itself easy and happy.

I don't see, Madam, how you would be happy, if I were to discontinue my address: for——

That is nothing to you, sir, interrupted I: do you but withdraw your pretensions: and if it be thought fit to start up another man for my punishment, the blame will not lie at your door. You will be entitled to my thanks; and most heartily will I thank you.

He paused, and seemed a little at a loss: and I was going to give him still stronger and more personal instances of my plain-dealing, when in came my uncle Antony.

So, niece, so!—sitting in state like a queen, giving audience! *haughty* audience!—Mr. Solmes, why stand you thus humbly?—Why this distance, man? I hope to see you upon a more intimate footing before we part.

I arose as soon as he entered—and approached him with a bent knee: Let me, sir, reverence my uncle, whom I have

not for so long time seen!—Let me, sir, bespeak your favour and compassion.

You will have the favour of everybody, niece, when you know how to deserve it.

If ever I deserved it, I deserve it now.—I have been hardly used!—I have made proposals that ought to be accepted, and such as would not have been *asked* of me. What have I done, that I must be banished and confined thus disgracefully? that I must not be allowed to have any free-will in an article that concerns my present and future happiness?

Miss Clary, replied my uncle, you have had your will in everything till now; and this makes your parents' wills sit so heavy upon you.

My will, sir! be pleased to allow me to ask what was my will till now, but my father's will, and yours and my uncle Harlowe's will?—Has it not been my pride to obey and oblige?—I never asked a favour that I did not first sit down and consider if it were *fit* to be granted. And now, to show my obedience, have I not offered to live single?—Have I not offered to divest myself of my grandfather's bounty, and to cast myself upon my father's? and that to be withdrawn, whenever I disoblige him? Why, dear, good sir, am I to be made unhappy in a point so concerning my happiness?

Your grandfather's estate is not wished from you. You are not desired to live a single life. You know *our* motives, and we guess at *yours*. And let me tell you, well as we love you, we should much sooner choose to follow you to the grave, than that *yours* should take place.

I will engage never to marry any man, without my father's consent, and yours, sir, and everybody's. Did I ever give you cause to doubt my word?—And here I will take the solemnest oath that can be offered me——

That is the matrimonial one, interrupted he, with a big voice—and to this gentleman.—It shall, it shall, cousin Clary!—And the more you oppose it, the worse it shall be for you.

This, and before the man, who seemed to assume courage upon it, highly provoked me.

Then, sir, you shall sooner follow me to the grave *indeed.* —I will undergo the cruellest death—I will even consent to enter into the awful vault of my ancestors, and have that bricked up upon me, rather than consent to be miserable for life. And, Mr. Solmes, turning to him, take notice of what I say: *this* or *any* death, I will sooner undergo [that will quickly be over] than be yours, and for *ever* unhappy!

My uncle was in a terrible rage upon this. He took Mr. Solmes by the hand, shocked as the man seemed to be, and drew him to the window—Don't be surprised, Mr. Solmes, don't be concerned at *this.* We know, and rapt out a sad oath, what women will say in their wrath: the wind is not more boisterous, nor more changeable; and again he swore to that.—If you think it worth your while to wait for such an ungrateful girl as this, I'll engage she'll *veer about;* I'll engage she *shall.* And a third time violently swore to it.

Then coming up to me (who had thrown myself, very much disordered by my vehemence, into the most distant window) as if he would have beat me; his face violently working, his hands clenched, and his teeth set—Yes, yes, yes, hissed the poor gentleman, you shall, you shall, you shall, cousin Clary, be Mr. Solmes's wife; we will see that you shall; and this in one week at farthest.—And then a fourth time he confirmed it!—Poor gentleman! how he swore!

I am sorry, sir, said I, to see you in such a passion. All this, I am but too sensible, is owing to my brother's instigation; who would not himself give the instance of duty that is sought to be exacted from me. It is best for me to withdraw. I shall but provoke you farther, I fear: for although I would gladly obey you if I could, yet this is a point determined with me; and I cannot so much as *wish* to get it over.

How could I avoid making these strong declarations, the man in presence?

I was going out at the door I came in at; the gentlemen looking upon one another, as if referring to each other what to do, or whether to engage my stay, or suffer me to go;

and whom should I meet at the door but my brother, who had heard all that had passed!

He bolted upon me so unexpectedly, that I was surprised. He took my hand, and grasped it with violence: Return, pretty Miss, said he; return, if you please. You shall not yet be *bricked up*. Your *instigating* brother shall save you from that!—Oh, thou fallen angel, said he, peering up to my downcast face—such a sweetness *here!*—and such an obstinancy *there!* tapping my neck—Oh, thou true woman—though so young!—But you shall not have your rake: remember that; in a loud whisper, as if he would be decently indecent before the man. You shall be redeemed, and this worthy gentleman, raising his voice, will be so good as to redeem you from ruin—and hereafter you will bless him, or have reason to bless him, for his *condescension;* that was the brutal brother's word!

He had led me up to meet Mr. Solmes, whose hand he took as he held mine. Here, sir, said he, take the rebel daughter's hand: I give it you now: she shall confirm the gift in a week's time; or will have neither father, mother, nor uncles, to boast of.

I snatched my hand away.

How now, Miss!

And how now, sir!—What right have *you* to dispose of my hand?—If you govern everybody else, you shall not govern me; especially in a point so immediately relative to myself, and in which you neither have, nor ever shall have, anything to do.

I would have broken from him; but he held my hand too fast.

Let me go, sir!—Why am I thus treated?—You *design*, I doubt not, with your unmanly gripings, to hurt me, as you do: but again I ask, wherefore is it that I am to be thus treated by *you?*

He tossed my hand from him with a whirl that pained my very shoulder. I wept, and held my other hand to the part.

Mr. Solmes blamed him. So did my uncle.

He had no patience, he said, with such a perverse one; and to think of the reflections upon himself, before he entered. He had only given me back the hand I had not deserved he should touch. It was one of my arts to pretend to be pained.

Mr. Solmes said, he would sooner give up all his hopes of me, than than I should be used unkindly.—And he offered to plead in my behalf to them both; and applied himself with a bow, as if for my approbation of his interposition.

Interpose not, Mr. Solmes, said I, to save me from my brother's violence. I cannot wish to owe an obligation to a man whose ungenerous perseverance is the occasion of *that* violence, and of all my disgraceful sufferings.

How generous in you, Mr. Solmes, said my brother, to interpose so kindly in behalf of such an immovable spirit! I beg of you to persist in your address—the unnatural brother called it *address!*—For all our family's sake, and for *her* sake too, if you love her, persist!—Let us save her, if possible, from ruining herself. Look at her person! [and he gazed at me from head to foot, pointing at me, as he referred to Mr. Solmes,] think of her fine qualities! —all the world confesses them, and we all gloried in her till now. She is worth saving; and after two or three more struggles, she will be yours, and take my word for it, will reward your patience. Talk not, therefore, of giving up your hopes, for a little whining folly. She has entered upon a parade, which she knows not how to quit with a *female grace.* You have only her pride and her obstinacy to encounter: and depend upon it, you will be as happy a man in a fortnight, as a married man *can* be.

You have heard me say, my dear, that my brother has always taken a liberty to reflect upon our sex, and upon matrimony!—He would not, if he did not think it *wit* to do so!—Just as poor Mr. Wyerley, and others whom we both know, profane and ridicule Scripture; and all to evince their pretensions to the same pernicious talent, and to have it thought they are too wise to be religious.

Mr. Solmes, with a self-satisfied air, presumptuously said, he would suffer everything, to *oblige* my family, and to *save* me: and doubted not to be amply rewarded, could he be so happy as to succeed at last.

Mr. Solmes, said I, if you have any regard for you own happiness (*mine* is out of the question with you, you have not generosity enough to make *that* any part of your scheme), prosecute no farther your *address*, as my brother calls it. It is but *just* to tell you, that I could not bring my heart so much as to *think* of you, without the utmost disapprobation, *before* I was used as I have been:—and can you think I am such a slave, such a *poor* slave, as to be brought to change my mind by the violent usage I have met with?

And you, sir, turning to my brother, if you think that *meekness* always indicates *tameness;* and that there is no *magnanimity* without *bluster:* own yourself mistaken for once: for you shall have reason to judge from henceforth that a generous mind is not to be forced; and that——

No more, said the imperious wretch, I charge you, lifting up his hands and eyes. Then turning to my uncle, Do you hear, sir? this is your once faultless niece! This is your favourite!

Mr. Solmes looked as if he knew not what to think of the matter; and had I been left alone with him, I saw plainly I could have got rid of him easily enough.

My uncle came to me, looking up also to my face, and down to my feet: and is it possible this can be *you?* All this violence from *you,* Miss Clary?

Yes, it *is* possible, sir—and, I will presume to say, this vehemence on my side is but the natural consequence of the usage I have met with, and the rudeness I am treated with, even in your presence, by a brother, who has no more right to control me than I have to control him.

This usage, Cousin Clary, was not till all other means were tried with you.

Tried! to what end, sir?—Do I contend for anything more than a mere negative? You *may,* sir [turning to

Mr. Solmes,] *possibly* you may be induced the *rather* to persevere thus ungenerously, as the usage I have met with for your sake, and what you have now seen offered to me by my brother, will show you what I *can* bear, were my evil destiny ever to make me yours.

Lord, Madam, cried Solmes [all this time distorted into twenty different attitudes, as my brother and my uncle were blessing themselves, and speaking only to each other by their eyes, and by their working features; Lord, Madam], what a construction is this!

A fair construction, sir, interrupted I: for he that can see a person whom he pretends to value thus treated, and approve of it, must be capable of treating her thus himself. And that you *do* approve of it, is evident by your declared perseverance, when you know I am confined, banished, and insulted, in order to make me consent to be what I never *can* be: and this let me tell you, as I have often told others, not from motives of obstinancy, but aversion.

Excuse me, sir, turning to my uncle—to you, as to my father's brother, I owe duty. I beg *your* pardon, that I cannot obey you.—But as for my *brother:* he is *but* my brother; he shall not constrain me.—And [turning to the unnatural wretch—I will call him wretch] knit your brows, sir, and frown as you will, I will ask you, would *you,* in my case, make the sacrifices I am willing to make, to obtain every one's favour? If *not,* what right have you to treat me thus; and to procure me to be treated as I have been for so long a time past?

I had put myself by this time into great disorder: they were silent, and seemed by their looks to want to talk to one another (walking about in violent disorders too) between whiles. I sat down fanning myself (as it happened, against the glass), and I could perceive my colour go and come; and being sick to the very heart, and apprehensive of fainting, I rung.

Betty came in. I called for a glass of water, and drank it: but nobody minded me. I heard my brother pronounce the words, Art! Female Art! to Solmes; which,

together with the apprehension that he would not be welcome, I suppose kept *him* back. Else I could see the man was affected. And (still fearing I should faint) I arose and taking hold of Betty's arm, let me hold by you, Betty, said I: let me withdraw. And moved with trembling feet towards the door, and then turned about, and made a courtesy to my uncle—Permit me, sir, said I, to withdraw.

Whither go you, niece? said my uncle: we have not done with you yet. I charge you depart not. Mr. Solmes has something to open to you, that will astonish you—and you *shall* hear it.

Only, sir, by your leave, for a few minutes into the air. I will return if you command it. I will hear all that I am to hear; that it may be over *now* and *for ever*.—You will go with me, Betty?

And so without any further prohibition, I retired into the garden; and there casting myself upon the first seat, and throwing Betty's apron over my face, leaning against her side, my hands between hers, I gave way to a violent burst of grief, or passion, or both; which, as it seemed, saved my heart from breaking, for I was sensible of an immediate relief.

I have already given you specimens of *Mrs.* Betty's impertinence. I shall not, therefore, trouble you with more: for the wench, notwithstanding this my distress, took great liberties with me, after she saw me a little recovered, and as I walked farther into the garden; insomuch that I was obliged to silence her by an absolute prohibition of saying another word to me; and then she dropped behind me sullen and gloomy.

It was near an hour before I was sent for in again. The messenger was my cousin Dolly Hervey, who, with an eye of compassion and respect (for Miss Hervey always loved me, and calls herself my scholar, as you know), told me my company was desired.

Betty left us.

Who commands my attendance, Miss? said I—Have you not been in tears, my dear?

Who can forbear tears? said she.

Why, what is the matter, cousin Dolly?—Sure, nobody is entitled to weep in this family but *me!*

Yes, *I* am, Madam, said she, because I love you.

I kissed her: And is it for me, my sweet cousin, that you shed tears?—There never was love lost between us: but tell me, what is designed to be done with me, that I have this kind instance of your compassion for me?

You must take no notice of what I tell you, said the dear girl: but my mamma has been weeping for you too, with me; but durst not let anybody see it: O my Dolly, said my mamma, there never was so set a malice in man as in your cousin James Harlowe. They will ruin the flower and ornament of their family.

As how, Miss Dolly?—Did she not explain herself?—As how, my dear?

Yes; she said Mr. Solmes would have given up his claim to you; for he said you hated him, and there were no hopes; and your mamma was willing he should; and to have you taken at your word, to renounce Mr. Lovelace and to live single. My mamma was for it too; for they heard all that passed between you and uncle Antony, and cousin James: saying it was impossible to think of prevailing upon you to have Mr. Solmes. Uncle Harlowe seemed in the same way of thinking; at least, my mamma says he did not say anything to the contrary. But your papa was immovable, and was angry at your mamma and mine upon it.—And hereupon your brother, your sister, and my uncle Antony, joined in, and changed the scene entirely. In short, she says, that Mr. Solmes had great matters engaged to him. He owned that you were the finest young lady in England, and he would be content to be but little beloved, if he could *not*, after marriage, engage your heart, for the sake of having the honour to call you his but for one twelvemonth—I suppose he would break your heart the next—for he is a cruel-hearted man, I am sure.

My friends may break my heart, cousin Dolly; but Mr. Solmes will never have it in his power to break it.

I do not know that, Miss: you will have good luck to avoid having him, by what I can find; for my mamma says, they are all now of one mind, herself excepted; and she is forced to be silent, your papa and brother are both so outrageous.

I am got above minding my brother, cousin Dolly:—he is *but* my brother. But to my father I owe duty and obedience, if I could comply.

We are apt to be fond of anybody that will side with us, when oppressed or provoked. I always loved my cousin Dolly; but now she endeared herself to me ten times more by her soothing concern for me. I asked what *she* would do were she in my case?

Without hesitation she replied, have Mr. Lovelace out of hand, and take up her own estate, if she were me; and there would be an end to it.—And Mr. Lovelace, she said, was a fine gentleman:—Mr. Solmes was not worthy to *buckle his shoes.*

Miss Hervey told me further that her mother was desired to come to me, to fetch me in; but she excused herself. I should have all my friends, she said, she believed, sit in judgment upon me.

I wish it had been so. But as I have been told since, neither my father nor my mother would trust themselves with seeing me: the one it seems for passion sake; my mother for tender considerations.

By this time we entered the house. Miss accompanied me into the parlour, and left me, as a person devoted, I then thought.

Nobody was there. I sat down, and had leisure to weep; reflecting upon what my cousin Dolly had told me.

They were all in my sister's parlour adjoining: for I heard a confused mixture of voices, some louder than others, which drowned the more compassionating accents.

Female accents I could distinguish the drowned ones to be. Oh, my dear! what a hard-hearted sex is the other! Children of the same parents, how came they by their cruelty?—Do they get it by travel?—Do they get it by con-

versation with one another?—Or how do they get it?—Yet my sister, too, is as hard-hearted as any of them. But this may be no exception neither: for she has been thought to be masculine in her air and her spirit. She has then, perhaps, a soul of the *other* sex in a body of *ours*. And so, for the honour of *our own*, will I judge of every woman for the future, who imitating the rougher manners of men, acts unbeseeming the gentleness of her own sex.

Forgive me, my dear friend, for breaking into my story by these reflections. Were I rapidly to pursue my narration, without thinking, without reflecting, I believe I should hardly be able to keep in my right mind: since vehemence and passion would then be always uppermost; but while I *think* as I write, I cool, and my hurry of spirits is allayed.

I believe I was above a quarter of an hour enjoying my own comfortless contemplations, before anybody came in to me; for they seemed to be in full debate. My aunt looked in first; Oh, my dear, said she, are you there? and withdrew hastily to apprise them of it.

And then (as agreed upon, I suppose) in came my uncle Antony, crediting Mr. Solmes with the words, *Let me lead you in, my dear friend,* having hold of his hand; while the new-made beau awkwardly followed, but more edgingly, as I may say, setting his feet mincingly, to avoid treading upon his leader's heels. Excuse me, my dear, this seeming levity; but those we do not love, appear in everything ungraceful to us.

I stood up. My uncle looked very surly.—Sit down!—Sit down, girl, said he.—And drawing a chair near me, he placed his *dear* friend in it, whether he would or not, I having taken my seat. And my uncle sat on the other side of me.

Well, niece, taking my hand, we shall have very little more to say to you than we have already said, as to the subject that is so distasteful to you—unless, indeed, you have better considered of the matter—And first let me know if you have?

The matter wants no consideration, sir.

Very well, very well, *Madam!* said my uncle, withdrawing his hands from mine: could I ever have thought of this from you?

For God's sake, dearest Madam, said Mr. Solmes, folding his hands—and there he stopped.

For God's sake, *what*, sir?—How came God's sake and your sake, I pray you, to be the same?

This silenced *him*. My uncle could *only* be angry; and that he was before.

Well, well, well, Mr. Solmes, said my uncle, no more of supplication. You have not *confidence* enough to expect a woman's favour.

He then was pleased to hint what great things he had designed to do for me; and that it was more for *my* sake, after he returned from the Indies, than for the sake of any *other* of the family, that he had resolved to live a single life.—But now, concluded he, that the perverse girl despises all the great things it was once as much in my will, as it is in my power to do for her, I will change my measures.

I told him, that I most sincerely thanked him for all his kind intentions to me: but that I was willing to resign all claim to any *other* of his favours than kind looks and kind words.

He looked about him this way and that.

Mr. Solmes looked pitifully down.

But both being silent, I was sorry, I added, that I had too much reason to say a very harsh thing, as I might be thought; which was, that if he would but be pleased to convince my brother and sister that he was absolutely determined to alter his generous purposes towards me, it might possibly procure me better treatment from both than I was otherwise likely to have.

My uncle was very much displeased. But he had not the opportunity to express his displeasure, as he seemed preparing to do; for in came my brother in exceeding great wrath; and called me several vile names. His success hitherto, in his device against me, had set him above keeping even decent measures.

Was this my spiteful construction? he asked—Was this the interpretation I put upon his brotherly care of me, and concern for me, in order to prevent my ruining myself?

It *is*, indeed it *is*, said I: I know no other way to account for your late behaviour to me: and before your face, I repeat my request to my uncle, and I will make it to my other uncle whenever I am permitted to see him, that they will confer all their favours upon you and upon my sister; and only make me happy (it is all I wish for!) in their kind looks and kind words.

How they all gazed upon one another!—But could I be less peremptory before the man?

And as to *your* care and concern for me, sir, turning to my brother; once more I desire it not. You are *but* my brother. My father and mother, I bless God, are both living; and were they *not*, you have given me abundant reason to say, that you are the very last person I would wish to have any concern for me.

How, niece! And is a brother, an *only* brother, of so little consideration with you, as this comes to? And ought he to have no concern for his sister's honour, and the family's honour?

My honour, sir!—I desire none of his concern for that! It never was endangered till it had his undesired concern! —Forgive me, sir—but when my brother knows how to act like a brother, or behave like a gentleman, he may deserve more consideration from me than it is possible for me now to think he does.

I thought my brother would have beat me upon this: but my uncle stood between us.

Violent girl, however, he called me—Who, said he, who would have thought it of her?

Then was Mr. Solmes told that I was unworthy of his pursuit.

But Mr. Solmes warmly took my part: he could not bear, he said, that I should be treated so roughly.

And so very much did he exert himself on this occasion, and so patiently was his warmth received by my brother,

that I began to suspect that it was a contrivance to make me think myself obliged to him; and that this might perhaps be one end of the pressed-for interview.

The very suspicion of this low artifice, violent as I was thought to be before, put me still more out of patience; and my uncle and my brother again praising his wonderful generosity, and his noble return of good for evil, You are a happy man, Mr. Solmes, said I, that you can so *easily* confer obligations upon a whole family, except upon one ungrateful person of it, whom you seem to intend *most* to oblige; but who being made unhappy by your favour, desires not to owe to *you* any protection from the violence of a brother.

Then was I a rude, an ungrateful, and unworthy creature.

I own it all—all, all you can call me, or think me, brother, do I own. I own my unworthiness with regard to this gentleman. I take your word for his abundant merit, which I have neither leisure nor inclination to examine into—it may perhaps be as great as your own—but yet I cannot thank him for his mediation: for who sees not, looking at my uncle, that this is giving himself a merit with everybody at my expense?

Then turning to my brother, who seemed surprised into silence by my warmth, I must also acknowledge, sir, the favour of *your* superabundant care for me. But I discharge you of it; at least, while I have the happiness of nearer and dearer relations. You have given me no reason to think better of *your* prudence than of my *own*. I am independent of *you*, sir, though I never desire to be so of my father: and although I wish for the good opinion of my uncles, it is *all* I wish for from them: and this, sir, I repeat, *to make you and my sister easy*.

Instantly almost came in Betty, in a great hurry, looking at me as spitefully as if she were my *sister*: Sir, said she to my brother, my master desires to speak with you this moment at the door.

He went to that which led into my sister's parlour; and this sentence I heard thundered from the mouth of one

who had a right to all my reverence: Son James, let the rebel be this moment carried away to my brother's—this very moment—she shall not stay one hour more under my roof!

I trembled; I was ready to sink. Yet, not knowing what I did, or said, I flew to the door, and would have opened it: but my brother pulled it to, and held it close by the key—Oh, my papa!—my dear papa! said I, falling upon my knees, at the door—admit your child to your presence!—Let me but plead my cause at your feet!—Oh! reprobate not thus your distressed daughter!

My uncle put his handkerchief to his eyes. Mr. Solmes made a still more grievous face than he had before. But my brother's marble heart was untouched.

I will not stir from my knees, continued I, without admission; at this door I beg it!—Oh! let it be the door of mercy! and open it to me, honoured sir, I beseech you! —But this once, this once! although you were afterwards to shut it against me for ever!

The door was endeavoured to be opened on the inside, which made my brother let go the key on a sudden; and I pressing against it (all the time remaining on my knees), fell flat on my face into the other parlour; however, without hurting myself. But everybody was gone, except Betty, who I suppose was the person that endeavoured to open the door. She helped to raise me up; and when I was on my feet, I looked round that apartment, and seeing nobody there, re-entered the other, leaning upon her; and then threw myself into the chair which I had sat in before; and my eyes overflowed, to my great relief: while my uncle Antony, my brother, and Mr. Solmes left me, and went to my other relations.

What passed among them, I know not: but my brother came in by the time I had tolerably recovered myself, with a settled and haughty gloom upon his brow—Your father and mother command you instantly to prepare for your uncle Antony's. You need not be solicitous about what you shall take with you; you may give Betty your keys—take them, Betty, if the perverse one has them about her; and

carry them to her mother. She will take care to send everything after you that you shall want—but another night you will not be permitted to stay in this house.

I don't choose to give my keys to anybody, except to my mother, and into her own hands.—You see how much I am disordered. It may cost me my life to be hurried away so suddenly. I beg to be indulged till next Monday at least.

That will not be granted you. So prepare for this very night. And give up your keys. Give them to *me*, Miss. I'll carry them to your mother!

Excuse me, brother. Indeed I won't.

Indeed you must. Have you anything you are afraid should be seen by your mother?

Not if I be permitted to attend her.

I'll make a report accordingly.

He went out.

In came Miss Dolly Hervey: I am sorry, Madam, to be the messenger—but your mamma insists upon your sending up all the keys of your cabinet, library, and drawers.

Tell my mother that I yield them up to her commands: tell her I make no conditions with my mother: but if she find nothing she shall disapprove of, I beg that she will permit me to tarry here a few days longer.—Try, my Dolly, [the dear girl sobbing with grief], try if your gentleness cannot prevail for me.

She wept still more, and said, it is sad, very sad, to see matters thus carried!

She took the keys, and wrapped her arms about me; and begged me to excuse her for her message; and would have said more; but Betty's presence awed her, as I saw.

Don't pity me, my dear, said I. It will be imputed to you as a fault. You see who is by.

The insolent wench scornfully smiled: One young lady pitying another in things of this nature, looks promising in the youngest, I must needs say.

I bid her begone from my presence.

She would most gladly go, she said, were she not to stay about me by my mother's order.

It soon appeared for what she stayed; for I offering to go up stairs to my apartment when my cousin went from me with the keys, she told me she was commanded (to her very great regret, she must own) to desire me not to go up at present.

Such a bold face as she, I told her, should not hinder me.

She instantly rang the bell, and in came my brother, meeting me at the door.

Return, return, Miss—no going up yet.

I went in again, and throwing myself upon the window-seat, wept bitterly.

Shall I give you the particulars of a ridiculously-spiteful conversation that passed between my brother and me, in the time that he (with Betty) was in office to keep me in the parlour while my closet was searching!—But I think I will not. It can answer no good end.

I desired several times, while he stayed, to have leave to retire to my apartment: but was denied. The search, I suppose, was not over.

Bella was one of those employed in it. They could not have a more diligent searcher. How happy it was they were disappointed!

But when my sister could not find the *cunning creature's* papers, I was to stand another visit from Mr. Solmes—preceded now by my aunt Hervey, solely against her will, I could see that; accompanied by my uncle Antony, in order to keep her steady, I suppose.

But being a little heavy (for it is now past two in the morning) I will lie down in my clothes, to indulge the kind summons, if it will be indulged.

—o—

Three o'clock, Wednesday Morning.

I COULD not sleep—only dozed away one half-hour.

My aunt Hervey accosted me thus:—Oh, my dear child, what troubles do you give to your parents, and to everybody!—I wonder at you!

I am sorry for it, Madam.

Sorry for it, child!—*Why* then so very obstinate?—Come, sit down, my dear. I will sit next you; taking my hand.

My uncle placed Mr. Solmes on the other side of me: himself over-against me, almost close to me. Was I not finely beset, my dear?

Your brother, child, said my aunt, is too passionate—his zeal for *your* welfare pushes him on a little too vehemently.

Very true, said my uncle: but no more of this. We would now be glad to see if milder means will do with you—though indeed they were tried before.

I asked my aunt if it were necessary that that gentleman should be present?

There is a reason that he should, said my aunt, as you will hear by and by.—But I must tell you, first, that thinking you was a little too angrily treated by your brother, your mother desired me to try what gentler means would do upon a spirit so generous as we used to think yours.

Nothing can be done, Madam, I must presume to say, if this gentleman's address be the end.

She looked upon my uncle, who bit his lip; and looked upon Mr. Solmes, who rubbed his cheek; and shaking her head, Good, dear creature, said she, be calm. Let me ask you, if something would have been done, had you been more gently used than you seem to think you have been?

No, Madam, I cannot say it would, in this gentleman's favour. You know, Madam, you know, sir, to my uncle, I ever valued myself upon my sincerity: and once indeed had the happiness to be valued for it.

My uncle took Mr. Solmes aside. I heard him say, whispering, She must, she shall, still be yours.—We'll see who'll conquer, parents or child, uncles or niece. I doubt not to be witness to all this being got over, and many a good-humoured jest made of this high phrensy!

I was heartily vexed.

Though we cannot find out, continued he, yet we *guess*, who puts her upon this obstinate behaviour. It is not natural to her, man. Nor would I concern myself so

much about her, but that I know what I say to be true, and intend to do great things for her.

I will hourly pray for that happy time, whispered as audibly Mr. Solmes. I never will revive the remembrance of what is now so painful to me.

Well, but, niece, I am to tell you, said my aunt, that the sending up your keys, without making any conditions, has wrought for you what nothing else could have done. That, and the not finding anything that could give them umbrage, together with Mr. Solmes's interposition——

O Madam, let me not owe an obligation to Mr. Solmes. I cannot repay it, except by my *thanks;* and *those* only on condition that he will decline his suit. To my thanks, sir [turning to him], if you have a heart capable of humanity, if you have any esteem for me for my *own* sake, I beseech you to entitle yourself!—I beseech you, do!

O Madam, cried he, believe, believe, believe me, it is impossible. While you are single, I *will* hope. While that hope is encouraged by so many worthy friends, I *must* persevere. I must not slight *them,* Madam, because you slight *me.*

I answered him only with a look; but it was of high disdain; and turning from him,—But what favour, dear Madam [to my aunt], has the instance of duty you mention procured me?

Your mother and Mr. Solmes, replied my aunt, have prevailed that your request to stay here till Monday next shall be granted, if you will promise to go cheerfully then.

Let me but choose my own visitors, and I will go to my uncle's house with pleasure.

Well, niece, said my aunt, we must waive this subject, I find. We will now proceed to another, which will require your utmost attention. It will give you the reason why Mr. Solmes's presence is requisite——

Ay, said my uncle, and show you what sort of a man somebody is. Mr. Solmes, pray favour us, in the first place, with the letter you received from your anonymous friend.

I will, sir. And out he pulled a letter-case, and taking out a letter, it is written in answer to one sent to the person. It is superscribed, *To Roger Solmes, Esq.* It begins thus: *Honoured Sir*—

I beg your pardon, sir, said I: but what, pray, is the intent of reading this letter to me?

To let you know what a vile man you are thought to have set your heart upon, said my uncle in an audible whisper.

If, sir, it be suspected that I have set my heart upon any other, why is Mr. Solmes to give himself any further trouble about me?

Only hear, niece, said my aunt; only hear what Mr. Solmes had to read and to say to you on this head.

If, Madam, Mr. Solmes will be pleased to declare that he has no view to serve, no end to promote, for himself, I will hear anything he shall read. But if the contrary, you must allow me to say, that it will abate with me a great deal of the weight of whatever he shall produce.

Hear it but read, niece, said my aunt——

Hear it read, said my uncle. You are so ready to take part with——

With anybody, sir, that is accused anonymously, and from interested motives.

He began to read; and there seemed to be a heavy load of charges in this letter against the poor criminal: but I stopped the reading of it, and said, It will not be *my* fault, if this vilified man be not as indifferent to me as one whom I never saw. If he be otherwise at present, which I neither own nor deny, it proceeds from the strange methods taken to prevent it. Do not let one cause unite him and me, and we shall not be united. If my offer to live single be accepted, he shall be no more to me than *this* gentleman.

Still—Proceed, Mr. Solmes—Hear it out, niece, was my uncle's cry.

But to what purpose, sir! said I.—Has not Mr. Solmes a *view* in this? And, besides, can anything worse be

said of Mr. Lovelace than I have heard said for several months past?

But this, said my uncle, and what Mr. Solmes can tell you besides, amounts to the *fullest proof*——

Was the unhappy man, then, so freely treated in his character before, *without* full proof? I beseech you, sir, give me not *too good* an opinion of Mr. Lovelace; as I *may* have, if such pains be taken to make him guilty, by one who means not his reformation by it; nor to do good, if I may presume to say so in this case, to anybody but himself.

I see very plainly, girl, said my uncle, your prepossession, your fond prepossession, for the person of a man without morals.

Indeed, my dear, said my aunt, you too much justify all your apprehension. Surprising! that a young creature of virtue and honour should thus esteem a man of a quite opposite character!

Dear Madam, do not conclude against me too hastily. I believe Mr. Lovelace is far from being so good as he ought to be: but if every man's private life were searched into by *prejudiced people*, set on for that purpose, I know not whose reputation would be safe. I love a virtuous character, as much in man as in woman. I think it is requisite, and as meritorious, in the one as in the other. And if left to myself, I would prefer a person of such a character to royalty without it.

Why then, said my uncle——

Give me leave, sir—but I may venture to say, that many of those who have escaped censure, have not merited applause.

Permit me to observe further, that Mr. Solmes himself may not be absolutely faultless. I never heard of his virtues. Some vices I have heard of—excuse me, Mr. Solmes, I speak to your face—the text about *casting the first stone* affords an excellent lesson.

He looked down; but was silent.

Mr. Lovelace may have vices *you* have not. You may

have others, which *he* has not. I speak not this to defend him, or to accuse you. No man is bad, no one is good in *everything*. Mr. Lovelace, for example, is said to be implacable, and to hate my friends: that does not make me value him the more: but give me leave to say, that *they* hate him as much. Mr. Solmes has his antipathies likewise; very *strong* ones, and those to his *own relations:* which I don't find to be the other's fault; for he lives well with *his*—yet he may have as bad:—worse, pardon me, he cannot have, in my poor opinion: for what must be the man who *hates his own flesh?*

You know not, Madam;
You know not, Niece; } all in one breath.
You know not, Clary;

I may not, nor do I desire to know Mr. Solmes's reasons. It *concerns* not me to know them: but the world, even the impartial part of it, accuses him. If the world is unjust or rash, in *one* man's case, why may it not be so in *another's?* That's all I mean by it. Nor can there be a greater sign of want of merit, than where a man seeks to pull down another's character, in order to build up his own.

The poor man's face was all this time overspread with confusion, twisted, as it were, and all awry, neither mouth nor nose standing in the middle of it. He looked as if he were ready to cry: and had he been capable of pitying me, I had certainly tried to pity him.

They all three gazed upon one another in silence.

My aunt, I saw (at least I thought so), looked as if she would have been glad she might have appeared to approve of what I said. She but feebly blamed me, when she spoke, for not hearing what Mr. Solmes had to say. He himself seemed not now very earnest to be heard. My uncle said, there was no talking to me. And I should have absolutely silenced both gentlemen, had not my brother come in again to their assistance.

This was the strange speech he made at his entrance, his eyes flaming with anger: This prating girl has struck you all dumb, I perceive. Persevere, however, Mr. Solmes.

I have heard every word she has said: and I know of no other method of being even with her, than after she is yours, to make her as sensible of your power as she now makes you of her insolence.

Fie, cousin Harlowe! said my aunt — Could I have thought a *brother* would have said this, to a gentleman, of a *sister?*

I must tell you, Madam, said he, that *you* give the rebel courage. You yourself seem to favour too much the arrogance of her sex in her; otherwise she durst not have thus stopped her uncle's mouth by reflections upon him; as well as denied to hear a gentleman tell her the danger she is in from a libertine, whose protection, as she as plainly hinted, she intends to claim against her family.

Stopped my uncle's mouth, by reflections upon him, sir! said I, how can that be? how *dare* you to make such an application as this?

My aunt wept at his reflection upon her.—Cousin, said she to him, if *this* be the thanks I have for my trouble, I have done: your father would not treat me thus—and I *will* say that the hint you gave was an unbrotherly one.

Not more unbrotherly than all the rest of his conduct to me, of late, Madam, said I. I see by this specimen of his violence, how everybody has been brought into his measures. Had I any the least apprehension of ever being in Mr. Solmes's power, this *might* have affected me. But you see, sir, to Mr. Solmes, what a conduct is thought necessary to enable you to arrive at your ungenerous end. You see how my brother *courts* for you.

I disclaim Mr. Harlowe's violence, Madam, with all my soul. I will never remind you——

Silence, worthy sir, said I; I will take care you never shall have the opportunity.

Less violence, Clary, said my uncle. Cousin James, you are as much to blame as your sister.

In then came my sister. Brother, said she, you kept not your promise. You are *thought* to be to blame within, as well as here. Were not Mr. Solmes's generosity and affec-

tion to the girl *well* known, what you have said would be inexcusable. My father desires to speak with you; and with you, aunt; and with you, uncle; and with you, Mr. Solmes, if you please.

They all four withdrew into the next apartment.

I stood silent, as not knowing presently how to take this intervention of my sister's. But she left me not long at a loss—Oh, thou perverse thing, said she [poking out her angry face at me, when they were all gone, but speaking spitefully low]—what trouble do you give to us all!

You and my brother, Bella, said I, give trouble to yourselves; yet neither you nor he have any business to concern yourselves about me.

She threw out some spiteful expressions, still in a low voice, as if she chose not to be heard without; and I thought it best to oblige her to raise her tone a little, if I could. If I *could*, did I say? It is easy to make a passionate spirit answer all one's views upon it.

She accordingly flamed out in a raised tone: and this brought my cousin Dolly in to us. Miss Harlowe, your company is desired.

I will come presently, cousin Dolly.

But again provoking a severity from me which she could not bear, and calling me names! in once more came Dolly with another message, that her company was desired.

Not mine, I doubt, Miss Dolly, said I.

The sweet-tempered girl burst out into tears, and shook her head.

Go in before me, child, said Bella [vexed to see her concern for me], with thy sharp face like a new moon. What dost thou cry for? is it to make thy keen face look still keener?

I believe Bella was blamed, too, when she went in; for I heard her say, the *creature* was so provoking, there was no keeping a resolution.

Mr. Solmes, after a little while, came in again by himself to take leave of me: full of scrapes and compliments; but too well tutored and encouraged, to give me hope of his

declining his suit. He begged me not to impute to him any of the severe things to which he had been a sorrowful witness. He besought my compassion, as he called it.

He said, the result was that he had still hopes given him; and although discouraged by me, he was resolved to persevere while I remained single.—And such long and such painful services he talked of, as never before were heard of.

I told him, in the strongest manner, what he had to trust to.

Yet still he determined to persist.—While I was no man's else, he must hope.

What! said I, will you still persist, when I declare, as I now do, that my affections are engaged?—And let my brother make the most of it.

He knew my principles, and adored me for them. He doubted not that it was in his power to make me happy: and he was sure I would not want the will to be so.

I assured him, that were I to be carried to my uncle's, it should answer no end; for I would never see him; nor receive a line from him; nor hear a word in his favour, whoever were the person who should mention him to me.

He was sorry for it. He must be miserable, were I to hold in that mind. But he doubted not, that I might be induced by my father and uncles to change it——

Never, never, he might depend upon it.

It was richly worth his patience, and the trial.

At my *expense?*—At the price of all my *happiness,* sir?

He hoped I should be induced to think otherwise.

And then would he have run into his fortune, his settlements, his affection—vowing, that never man loved a woman with so sincere a passion as he loved me.

I stopped him, as to the first part of his speech: and to the second, of the sincerity of his passion, What then, sir, said I, is your love to one, who must assure you, that never young creature looked upon man with a more sincere disapprobation, than I look upon you? And tell me, what argument can you urge, that this *true* declaration answers not beforehand?

Dearest Madam, what can I say?—On my knees I beg—

And down the ungraceful wretch dropped on his knees.

Let me not kneel in vain, Madam: let me not be thus despised.—And he looked most odiously sorrowful.

I have kneeled too, Mr. Solmes: often have I kneeled: and I will kneel again—even to *you*, sir, will I kneel, if there be so much merit in kneeling; provided you will not be the implement of my cruel brother's undeserved persecution.

If all the services, even to worship you, during my whole life—You, Madam, invoke and expect mercy; yet show none——

Am I to be cruel to myself, to show mercy to you; take my estate, sir, with all my heart, since you are such a favourite in this house!—only leave me *myself*—the mercy you ask for, do you show to others.

If you mean to my relations, Madam—unworthy as they are, all shall be done that you shall prescribe.

Who, I, sir, to find you bowels you naturally have not? I to purchase *their* happiness by the forfeiture of *my own?* What I ask you for, is mercy to myself: that since you seem to have some power over my relations, you will use it in my behalf. Tell them that you see I cannot conquer my aversion to you: tell them, if you are a wise man, that you too much value your own happiness, to risk it against such a determined antipathy: tell them that I am unworthy of your offers, and that in mercy to yourself, as well as to me, you will not prosecute a suit so impossible to be granted.

I will risk all consequences, said the fell wretch, rising, with a countenance whitened over, as if with malice, his hollow eyes flashing fire, and biting his under lip, to show he could be *manly*. Your hatred, Madam, shall be no objection with me: and I doubt not in a few days to have it in my power to show you——

You have it in your power, Sir——

He came well off—*To show you* more generosity than, noble as you are said to be to others, you show to me.

The man's face became his anger: it seems formed to express the passion.

At that instant again came in my brother—Sister, Sister, Sister, said he, with his teeth set, act on the termagant part you have so newly assumed—most wonderfully well does it become you. It is but a short one, however. Tyranness in your turn, accuse others of your own guilt—but leave her, leave her, Mr. Solmes: her time is short. You'll find her humble and mortified enough very quickly. Then, how like a little tame fool will she look, with her conscience upbraiding her, and begging of you [with a whining voice, the barbarous brother spoke] to forgive and forget!

More he said, as he flew out, with a glowing face, upon Shorey's coming in to recall him on his violence.

I removed from chair to chair, excessively frighted and disturbed at this brutal treatment.

The man attempted to excuse himself, as being sorry for my brother's passion.

Leave me, leave me, sir, fanning—or I shall faint. And indeed I thought I should.

He recommended himself to my favour with an air of assurance; augmented, as I thought, by a distress so visible in me; for he even snatched my trembling, my struggling hand; and ravished it to his odious mouth.

I flung from him with high disdain: and he withdrew, bowing and cringing; self-gratified, and enjoying, as I thought, the confusion he saw me in.

The wretch is now, methinks, before me; and now I see him awkwardly striding backward, as he retired, till the edge of the opened door, which he ran against, remembered him to turn his welcome back upon me.

Upon his withdrawing, Betty brought me word that I was permitted to go up to my own chamber: and was bid to consider of everything: for my time was short. Nevertheless, she believed I might be permitted to stay till Saturday.

She tells me, that although my brother and sister were blamed for being so *hasty* with me, yet when they made *their* report, and my uncle Antony *his*, of *my* provocations,

they were all more determined than ever in Mr. Solmes's favour.

The wretch himself, she tells me, pretends to be more in love with me than before; and to be rather delighted than discouraged with the conversation that passed between us. He ran on, she says, in raptures, about the grace wherewith I should dignify his board; and the like sort of stuff, either of *his* saying, or of *her* making.

She closed all with a Now is your time, Miss, to submit with a grace, and to make your own terms with him:—else, I can tell you, were I Mr. Solmes, it should be worse for you: and who, Miss, of *our* sex, proceeded the saucy creature, would admire a rakish gentleman, when she might be admired by a sober one to the end of the chapter?

She made this further speech to me on quitting my chamber—You have had *amazing* good luck, Miss, I must tell you, to keep your writings concealed so cunningly. You must needs think I know that you are always at your pen: and as you endeavour to hide that knowledge from me, I do not think myself obliged to keep your secret. But I love not to aggravate. I had rather reconcile by much. Peace-making is my talent, and ever was. And had I been as much your foe, as you imagine, you had not perhaps been here now. But this, however, I do not say to make a merit with you, Miss: for, truly, it will be the better for you the sooner everything is over with you. And better for me, and for every one else; that's certain. Yet one hint I must conclude with; that your pen and ink (soon as you are to go away) will not be long in your power, I do assure you, Miss. And then, having lost *that* amusement, it will be seen how a mind so active as yours will be able to employ itself.

This hint alarms me so much, that I shall instantly begin to conceal, in different places, pens, ink, and paper; and to deposit some in the ivy summer-house, if I can find a safe place there; and, at the worst, I have got a pencil of black, and another of red lead, which I use in my drawings; and my patterns shall serve for paper, if I have no other.

How lucky it was that I had got away my papers! They made a strict search for them; that I can see, by the disorderly manner they have left all things in: for you know that I am such an observer of method, that I can go to a bit of ribband, or lace, or edging, blindfold. The same in my books; which they have strangely disordered and mismatched; to look *behind* them, and *in* some of them, I suppose. My clothes, too, are rumpled not a little. No place has escaped them. To your hint, I thank you, are they indebted for their disappointment.

The pen, through heaviness and fatigue, dropt out of my fingers, at the word *indebted.* I resumed it, to finish the sentence; and to tell you that I am,

Your for ever obliged and affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

—o—

LETTER II.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Wednesday, eleven o'clock, April 5.

I MUST write as I have opportunity; making use of my concealed stores: for my pens and ink (all of each that they could find) are taken from me; as I shall tell you more particularly by and by.

About an hour ago I deposited my long letter to you; as also, in the usual place, a billet to Mr. Lovelace, lest his impatience should put him upon some rashness; signifying, in four lines, 'That the interview was over; and that I 'hoped my steady refusal of Mr. Solmes would discourage 'any further applications to me in his favour.'

Although I was unable (through the fatigue I had undergone, and by reason of sitting up all night to write to you, which made me lie longer than ordinary this morning) to deposit my letter to you sooner, yet I hope you will have it in such good time, as that you will be able to send me an answer to it this night, or in the morning early; which, if

ever so short, will inform me whether I may depend upon your mother's indulgence or not. This it behoves me to know as soon as possible; for they are resolved to hurry me away on Saturday next at farthest; perhaps to-morrow.

I will now inform you of all that has happened previous to their taking away my pen and ink, as well as of the manner in which that act of violence was committed; and this as briefly as I can.

My aunt, who (as well as Mr. Solmes, and my two uncles) lives here, I think, came up to me, and said she would fain have me hear what Mr. Solmes had to say of Mr. Lovelace —only that I may be apprised of some things that would convince me what a vile man he is, and what a wretched husband he must make. I might give them what degree of credit I pleased; and take them with abatement for Mr. Solmes's interestedness, if I thought fit. But it might be of use to me, were it but to question Mr. Lovelace indirectly upon some of them, that related to *myself*.

I was indifferent, I said, about what he could say of me, as I was sure it could not be to my disadvantage; and as *he* had no reason to impute to me the forwardness which my unkind friends had so causelessly taxed me with.

She said that he gave himself high airs on account of his family; and spoke as despicably of ours as if an alliance with *us* were beneath him.

I replied that he was a very unworthy man, if it were true, to speak slightingly of a family which was as good as his own, 'bating that it was not allied to the peerage: that the dignity itself, I thought, conveyed more shame than honour to descendants, who had not merit to adorn, as well as to be adorned by it: that my brother's absurd pride, indeed, which made him everywhere declare he would never marry but to *quality*, gave a disgraceful preference against ours: but that were I to be assured that Mr. Lovelace was capable of so mean a pride as to insult us or value himself on such an accidental advantage, I should think as despicably of his sense as everybody else did of his morals.

She insisted upon it, that he had taken such liberties;

and offered to give some instances, which, she said, would surprise me.

I answered that were it ever so certain that Mr. Lovelace had taken such liberties, it would be but common justice (so much hated as he was by all our family, and so much inveighed against in all companies by them) to inquire into the provocation he had to say what was imputed to him; and whether the value some of my friends put upon the riches they possess (throwing perhaps contempt upon every other advantage, and even discrediting *their own* pretensions to family, in order to depreciate *his*) might not provoke him to like contempts. Upon the whole, Madam, said I, can you say that the inveteracy lies not as much on *our* side as on *his?* Can *he* say anything of *us* more disrespectful than *we* say of *him?*—And as to the suggestion, so often repeated, that he will make a bad husband, is it possible for him to use a wife worse than I am used; particularly by my brother and sister?

Ah, niece! Ah, my dear! how firmly has this wicked man attached you!

Perhaps not, Madam. But really great care should be taken by fathers and mothers, when they would have their daughters of *their* minds in these particulars, not to say things that shall necessitate the child, in honour and generosity, to take part with the man her friends are averse to. But waiving all this, as I have offered to renounce him for ever, I see not why he should be mentioned to me, nor why I should be wished to hear anything about him.

Well, but still, my dear, there can be no harm to let Mr. Solmes tell you what Mr. Lovelace has said of *you.* Severely as you have treated Mr. Solmes, he is fond of attending you once more: he begs to be heard on this head.

If it be proper for me to hear it, Madam——

It *is,* eagerly interrupted she, very proper.

Has what he has said of *me,* Madam, convinced *you* of Mr. Lovelace's baseness?

It has, my dear: and that you ought to abhor him for it.

Then, dear Madam, be pleased to let me hear it from *your*

mouth: there is no need that I should see Mr. *Solmes*, when it will have double the weight from *you*. What, Madam, has the man dared to say of *me?*

My aunt was quite at a loss.

At last, Well, said she, I see how you are attached. I am sorry for it, Miss. For I do assure you it will signify nothing. You must be Mrs. Solmes; and that in a very few days.

If consent of heart, and assent of voice, be necessary to a marriage, I am sure I never can, nor ever will, be married to Mr. Solmes. And what will any of my relations be answerable for, if they force my hand into his, and hold it there till the service be read; I perhaps insensible and in fits all the time!

What a romantic picture of a forced marriage have you drawn, niece! Some people would say you have given a fine description of your own obstinacy, child.

My brother and sister would: but you, Madam, distinguish, I am sure, between obstinacy and aversion.

Supposed aversion may owe its rise to *real* obstinacy, my dear.

I know my own heart, Madam. I wish *you* did.

Well, but see Mr. Solmes once more, niece. It will oblige and make for you more than you imagine.

What should I see him for, Madam?—Is the man fond of hearing me declare my aversion to him?—Is he desirous of having me more and more incense my friends against myself? —*Oh, my cunning, my ambitious brother!*

Ah, my dear! with a look of pity, as if she understood the meaning of my exclamation—but must that necessarily be the case?

It must, Madam, if they will take offence at me for declaring my steadfast detestation of Mr. Solmes as a husband.

Mr. Solmes is to be pitied, said she. He adores you. He longs to see you once more. He loves you the better for your cruel usage of him yesterday. He is in raptures about you.

Ugly creature, thought I!—He in raptures!

What a cruel wretch must he be, said I, who can enjoy

the distress to which he so largely contributes!—But I see, I see, Madam, that I am considered as an animal to be baited, to make sport for my brother and sister, and Mr. Solmes. They are all, all of them, wanton in their cruelty. —*I*, Madam, see the man! the man so incapable of pity!—Indeed I will not see him if I can help it—indeed I will not.

What a construction does your lively wit put upon the admiration Mr. Solmes expresses of you!—Passionate as you were yesterday, and contemptuously as you treated him, he dotes upon you for the very severity by which he suffers. He is not so ungenerous a man as you think him: nor has he an unfeeling heart.—Let me prevail upon you, my dear (as your *father* and *mother* expect it of you), to see him once more, and hear what he has to say to you.

How can I consent to see him again, when yesterday's interview was interpreted by you, Madam, as well as by every other, as an encouragement to him? when I, myself declared, that if I saw him a *second* time by my own consent, it might be so taken? and when I am determined never to encourage him?

You might spare your reflections upon *me*, Miss. I have no thanks either from one side or the other.

And away she flung.

Dearest Madam! said I, following her to the door——

But she would not hear me further; and her sudden breaking from me occasioned a hurry to some mean listener; as the slipping of a foot from the landing-place on the stairs discovered to me.

I had scarcely recovered myself from this attack, when up came Betty—Miss, said she, your company is desired below stairs in your own parlour.

By whom, Betty?

How can I tell, Miss?—perhaps by your sister, perhaps by your brother—I know they won't come upstairs to your apartment again.

Is Mr. Solmes gone, Betty?

I believe he is, Miss—Would you have him sent for back? said the bold creature.

Down I went: and to whom should I be sent for, but to my brother and Mr. Solmes! the latter standing sneaking behind the door, so that I saw him not, till I was mockingly led by the hand into the room by my brother. And then I started as if I had beheld a ghost.

You are to sit down, Clary.

And what then, brother?

Why then, you are to put off that scornful look, and hear what Mr. Solmes has to say to you.

Sent for down to be baited again, thought I!

Madam, said Mr. Solmes, as if in haste to speak, lest he should not have an opportunity given him [and indeed he judged right], Mr. Lovelace is a declared *marriage hater*, and has a design upon your honour, if ever——

Base accuser! said I, in a passion, snatching my hand from my brother, who was insolently motioning to give it to Mr. Solmes; he has not!—he dares not!—But *you* have, if endeavouring to force a free mind be to dishonour it!

Oh, thou violent creature! said my brother—but not gone yet—for I was rushing away.

What mean you, sir [struggling vehemently to get away], to detain me thus against my will?

You shall not go, Violence; clasping his unbrotherly arms about me.

Then let not Mr. Solmes stay.—Why hold you me thus? he shall not, for *your own* sake, if I can help it, see how barbarously a brother can treat a sister who deserves not evil treatment.

And I struggled so vehemently to get from him, that he was forced to quit my hand; which he did with these words —Begone then, Fury!—how strong is will!—there is no holding her.

And up I flew to my chamber, and locked myself in, trembling and out of breath.

In less than a quarter of an hour up came Betty. I let her in upon her tapping, and asking (half out of breath too) for admittance.

The Lord have mercy upon us! said she.—What a *con-*

fusion of a house is this! [hurrying up and down fanning herself with her handkerchief], such angry masters and mistresses!—such an obstinate young lady!—such an humble lover!—such enraged uncles!—such—oh, dear!—dear! what a topsy-turvy house is this!—And all for what, trow?—only because a young lady *may* be happy, and will *not?*—only because a young lady *will* have a husband, and will *not* have a husband? What hurlyburlies are here, where all used to be peace and quietness!

Thus she ran on to herself; while I sat as patiently as I could (being assured that her errand was not designed to be a welcome one to me) to observe when her soliloquy would end.

At last, turning to me—I must do as I am bid. I can't help it—don't be angry with me, Miss. But I must carry down your pen and ink: and that this moment.

By whose order?

By your papa's and mamma's.

How shall I know that?

She offered to go to my closet: I stept in before her: touch it, if you dare.

Up came my cousin Dolly—Madam!—Madam! said the poor weeping, good-natured creature, in broken sentences—you must—indeed you must—deliver to Betty—or to me—your pen and ink.

Must I, my sweet Cousin? then I will to you; but not to this bold body. And so I gave my standish to her.

I am sorry, very sorry, said she, Miss, to be the messenger: but your papa will not have you in the same house with him: he is resolved you shall be carried away to-morrow, or Saturday at farthest. And therefore your pen and ink are taken away, that you may give nobody notice of it.

And away went the dear girl, very sorrowful, carrying down with her my standish, and all its furniture, and a little parcel of pens beside, which having been seen when the great search was made, she was bid to ask for.

As it happened, I had not diminished it, having hid

half a dozen crow-quills in as many different places. It was lucky; for I doubt not they had numbered how many were in the parcel.

Betty ran on, telling me that my mother was now as much incensed against me as anybody—that my doom was fixed—that my violent behaviour had not left one to plead for me—that Mr. Solmes bit his lip, and muttered, and *seemed to have more in his head, than could come out at his mouth;* that was her phrase.

And yet she also hinted to me, that the cruel wretch took pleasure in seeing me; although so much to my disgust—and so wanted to see me again.—Must he not be a savage, my dear?

The wench went on—that my uncle Harlowe said that now *he* gave me up—that he pitied Mr. Solmes—yet hoped he would not think of this to my detriment hereafter; that my uncle Antony was of opinion that I ought to smart for it: *and*, for *her* part—and then, as one of the family, she gave her opinion of the same side.

As I have no other way of hearing anything that is said or intended below, I bear sometimes more patiently than I otherwise should do with her impertinence. And indeed she seems to be in all my brother's and sister's counsels.

Miss Hervey came up again, and demanded a half-pint ink-bottle which they had seen in my closet.

I gave it her without hesitation.

If they had no suspicion of my being able to write, they will perhaps let me stay longer than otherwise they would.

This, my dear, is now my situation.

All my dependence, all my hopes, are in your mother's favour. But for that, I know not *what* I might do: for who can tell what will come next.

—o—

LETTER III.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Wednesday, four o'clock in the afternoon.

I AM just returned from depositing the letter I so lately finished, and such of Mr. Lovelace's letters as I had not sent you. My long letter I found remaining there—so you will have both together.

I am concerned, methinks, it is not with you.—But your servant cannot always be at leisure. However, I will deposit as fast as I write. I must keep nothing by me now; and when I write, lock myself in, that I may not be surprised now they think I have no pen and ink.

I found in the usual place another letter from this diligent man: and, by its contents, a confirmation that nothing passes in this house but he knows it; and that almost as soon as it passes. For this letter must have been written before he could have received my billet; and deposited, I suppose, when that was taken away; yet he compliments me in it upon asserting myself (as he calls it) on that occasion to my uncle and to Mr. Solmes.

'He assures me, however, that they are more and more 'determined to subdue me.

'He sends me the compliments of his family; and ac-'quaints me with their earnest desire to see me amongst 'them. Most vehemently does he press for my quitting 'this house, while it is in my power to get away: and 'again craves leave to order his uncle's chariot-and-six 'to attend my commands at the stile leading to the coppice 'adjoining to the paddock.

'Settlements to my own will he again offers,—Lord 'M. and Lady Sarah and Lady Betty to be guarantees 'of his honour and justice. But if I choose not to go to 'either of those ladies, nor yet to make him the happiest 'of men so soon as it is nevertheless his hope that I will, 'he urges me to withdraw to my own house, and to accept

'of my Lord M. for my guardian and protector till my 'cousin Morden arrives. He can contrive, he says, to 'give me easy possession of it, and will fill it with his 'female relations on the first invitation from me; and Mrs. 'Norton, or Miss Howe, may be undoubtedly prevailed 'upon to be with me for a time. There can be no pre-'tence for litigation, he says, when I am once in it. Nor, 'if I choose to have it so, will he appear to visit me; nor 'presume to mention marriage to me till all is quiet and 'easy; till every method I shall prescribe for a reconcilia-'tion with my friends is tried; till my cousin comes; till 'such settlements are drawn as he shall approve of for me; 'and that I have unexceptionable proofs of his own good 'behaviour.'

As to the disgrace a person of my character may be apprehensive of upon quitting my father's house, he observes (too truly I doubt), 'That the treatment I meet with is in 'every one's mouth: yet, he says, that the public voice is 'in my favour. My friends themselves, he says, *expect* 'that I will do myself what he calls, this justice: why 'else do they confine me? He urges that, thus treated, 'the independence I have a right to will be my sufficient 'excuse, going but from their house to my own, if I choose 'that measure; or in order to take possession of my own, 'if I do not: that all the disgrace I *can* receive, they have 'already given me: that his concern, and his family's 'concern, in my honour will be equal to my own, if he 'may be so happy ever to call me his: and he presumes, 'he says, to aver that no family can better supply the 'loss of my own friends to me than his, in whatever way 'I shall do them the honour to accept of his and their 'protection.

'But he repeats, that, in all events, he will oppose my 'being carried to my uncle's; being well assured that I 'shall be lost to him for ever, if once I enter into that 'house.' He tells me, 'That my brother and sister, and 'Mr. Solmes, design to be there to receive me: that my 'father and mother will not come near me till the cere-

'mony is actually over: and that then they will appear, 'in order to try to reconcile me to my odious husband, by 'urging upon me the obligations I shall be supposed to be 'under from a double duty.'

How, my dear, am I driven on one side, and invited on the other!—This last intimation is but a too probable one. All the steps they take seem to tend to this! And indeed they have declared almost as much.

He owns, 'That he has already taken his measures upon 'this intelligence:—but that he is *so* desirous for *my sake* '(I must *suppose,* he says, that he owes *them* no forbear-'ance *for their own*) to avoid coming to extremities, that 'he has suffered a person, whom they do not suspect, to 'acquaint them with his resolutions, as if come at by 'accident, if they persist in their design to carry me by 'violence to my uncle's; in hopes that they may be 'induced, from the fear of mischief which may ensue, to '*change* their measures: and yet he is aware that he has 'exposed himself to the greatest risks by having caused this 'intimation to be given them; since, if he cannot benefit 'himself by their fears, there is no doubt but they will 'doubly guard themselves against him upon it.'

What a dangerous enterpriser, however, is this man!

'He begs a few lines from me by way of answer to this 'letter, either this evening or to-morrow morning. If he 'be not so favoured, he shall conclude, from what he knows 'of the fixed determination of my relations, that I shall be 'under a closer restraint than before: and he shall be 'obliged to take his measures according to that presump-'tion.'

You will see by this abstract, as well as by his letter preceding this (for both run in the same strain), how strangely forward the difficulty of my situation has brought him in his declarations and proposals; and in his threatenings too: which, but for that, I would not take from him.

Something, however, I must speedily resolve upon, or it will be out of my power to help myself.

Now I think of it, I will enclose his letter (so might have

spared the abstract of it), that you may the better judge of all his proposals, and intelligence; and lest it should fall into other hands. I cannot forget the contents, although I am at a loss what answer to return.*

I cannot bear the thoughts of throwing myself upon the protection of his friends:—but I will not examine his proposals closely till I hear from you. Indeed I have no *eligible* hope, but in your mother's goodness. *Hers* is a protection I could more *reputably* fly to, than to that of any other person: and from hers should be ready to return to my father's (for the breach then would not be irreparable, as it would be, if I fled to his family): to *return*, I repeat, on such terms as shall secure but my *negative;* not my *independence:* I do not aim at that (so shall lay your mother under the less difficulty); though I have a right to be put into possession of my grandfather's estate, if I were to insist upon it:—such a right, I mean, as my brother exerts in the estate left *him;* and which nobody disputes.—God forbid that I should ever think myself freed from my father's *reasonable* control, whatever right my grandfather's will has given me! He, good gentleman, left me that estate, as a reward of my duty, and not to set me above it, as has been justly hinted to me: and this reflection makes me more fearful of not answering the intention of so valuable a bequest.—Oh! that my friends knew but my heart!—Would but think of it as they used to do!—For once more, I say, if it deceive me not, it is not altered, although theirs are!

Would but your mother permit you to send her chariot, or chaise, to the bye-place where Mr. Lovelace proposes Lord M.'s shall come (provoked, intimidated, and apprehensive, as I am), I would not hesitate a moment what to do. Place me anywhere, as I have said before—in a cot, in a garret; anywhere—disguised as a servant—or let me pass as a servant's sister—so that I may but escape Mr. Solmes on one hand, and the disgrace of refuging with the

* She accordingly encloses Mr. Lovelace's letter. But as the most material contents of it are given in her abstract, it is omitted.

family of a man at enmity with my own, on the other; and I shall be in some measure happy!—Should your good mother refuse me, what refuge, or whose, can I fly to?—Dearest creature, advise your distressed friend.

I BROKE off here—I was so excessively uneasy, that I durst not trust myself with my own reflections. I therefore went down to the garden, to try to calm my mind, by shifting the scene. I took but one turn upon the filbert-walk, when Betty came to me. Here, Miss, is your papa—here is your uncle Antony—here is my young master—and my young mistress, coming to take a walk in the garden; and your papa sends me to see where you are, for fear he should meet you.

I struck into an oblique path, and got behind the yew-hedge, seeing my sister appear; and there concealed myself till they were gone past me.

My mother, it seems, is not well. My poor mother keeps her chamber—should she be worse, I should have an additional unhappiness, in apprehension that my reputed undutifulness had touched her heart.

You cannot imagine what my emotions were behind the yew-hedge, on seeing my father so near me. I was glad to look at him through the hedge as he passed by: but I trembled in every joint, when I heard him utter *these* words: Son James, to you, and to Bella, and to you, brother, do I wholly commit this matter. That I was meant, I cannot doubt. And yet, why was I so affected; since I may be said to have been given up to the cruelty of my brother and sister for many days past?

WHILE my father remained in the garden, I sent my dutiful compliments to my mother, with inquiry after her health, by Shorey, whom I met accidentally upon the stairs; for none of the servants, except my gaoleress, dare to throw themselves in my way. I had the mortification of such a return, as made me repent my message, though not my concern for her health. 'Let her not inquire after the

'disorders she occasions,' was her harsh answer. 'I will 'not receive any compliments from her.'

Very, *very* hard, my dear! Indeed it is very hard.

I HAVE the pleasure to hear that my mother is already better. A colicky disorder, to which she is too subject. It is hoped it is gone off—God send it may!—Every evil that happens in this house is owing to me!

This good news was told me, with a circumstance very unacceptable; for Betty said, she had orders to let me know that my garden-walks and poultry-visits were suspected; and that both will be prohibited, if I stay here till Saturday or Monday.

Possibly this is said by order, to make me go with less reluctance to my uncle's.

My mother bid her say, if I expostulated about these orders, and about my pen and ink, 'that reading was more 'to the purpose, at present, than writing: that by the one, 'I might be taught my duty; that the other, considering 'whom I was believed to write to, only stiffened my will: 'that my needle-works had better be pursued than my 'airings; which were observed to be taken in all weathers.'

So, my dear, if I do not resolve upon something soon, I shall neither be able to avoid the intended evil, nor have it in my power to correspond with you.

—o—

Wednesday Night.

ALL is in a hurry below-stairs. Betty is in and out like a spy. Something is working, I know not what. I am really a good deal disordered in body as well as mind. Indeed I am quite heart-sick.

I will go down, though 'tis almost dark, on pretence of getting a little air and composure. Robert has my two former, I hope, before now: and I will deposit this, with Lovelace's enclosed, if I can, for fear of another search.

I know not what I shall do!—All is so strangely busy! —Doors clapt to—going out of one apartment, hurryingly,

as I may say, into another. Betty in her alarming way, staring, as if of frighted importance; twice with me in half an hour; called down in haste by Shorey the last time; leaving me with still *more* meaning in her looks and gestures—yet possibly nothing in all this worthy of my apprehensions—

Here again comes the creature, with her deep-drawn affected sighs, and her *O dear's! O dear's!*

MORE dark hints thrown out by the saucy creature. But she will not explain herself. 'Suppose this pretty 'business ends in murder! she says. I may rue my opposi-'tion as long as I live, for aught she knows. Parents will 'not be *baffled* out of their children by impudent gentle-'men; nor is it fit they should. It may come home to me 'when I least expect it.'

These are the gloomy and perplexing hints this impertinent throws out. Probably they arise from the information Mr. Lovelace says he has secretly permitted them to have (from this vile double-faced agent, I suppose!) of his resolution to prevent my being carried to my uncle's.

How *justly*, if so, may this exasperate them!—How am I driven to and fro, like a feather in the wind, at the pleasure of the rash, the selfish, and the headstrong! and when I am as averse to the proceedings of the one as I am to those of the other! For although I was induced to carry on this unhappy correspondence, as I think I ought to call it, in hopes to prevent mischief, yet indiscreet measures are fallen upon by the rash man, before I, who am so much concerned in the event of the present contentions, can be consulted: and between his violence on one hand, and that of my relations on the other, I find myself in danger from both.

Oh my dear! what is worldly wisdom but the height of folly!—I, the meanest, at least the youngest of my father's family, to thrust myself in the gap between such uncontrollable spirits!—To the intercepting perhaps of the designs of Providence, which may intend to make those hostile spirits

their own punishers.—If so, what presumption!—Indeed, my dear friend, I am afraid I have thought myself of too much consequence. But, however this be, *it is good, when calamities befall us, that we should look into ourselves, and fear.*

If I am prevented depositing this and the enclosed (as I intend to try to do, late as it is), I will add to it as occasion shall offer. Meantime, believe me to be

Your ever affectionate and grateful

CL. HARLOWE.

Under the superscription, written with a pencil, after she went down.

'My two former are not yet taken away—I am surprised '—I hope you are well—I hope all is right betwixt 'your mother and you.'

—o—

LETTER IV.

Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

Thursday Morning, April 9.

I HAVE your three letters. Never was there a creature more impatient on the most interesting uncertainty than I was, to know the event of the interview between you and Solmes.

It behoves me to account to my dear friend, in her present unhappy situation, for everything that may have the least appearance of negligence or remissness on my part. I sent Robin in the morning early, in hopes of a deposit. He loitered about the place till near ten to no purpose; and then came away; my mother having given him a letter to carry to Mr. Hunt's, which he was to deliver before three, when only, in the daytime, that gentleman is at home; and to bring her back an answer to it. Mr. Hunt's house, you know, lies wide from Harlowe Place. Robin but just saved his time; and returned not till it was

too late to send him again. I could only direct him to set out before day this morning; and if he got any letter, to ride as for his life to bring it to me.

I lay by myself: a most uneasy night I had through impatience; and being discomposed with it, lay longer than usual. Just as I was risen, in came Kitty, from Robin, with your three letters. I was not a quarter dressed; and only slipt on my morning sack; proceeding no further till I had read them all through, long as they are: and yet I often stopped to rave aloud (though by myself) at the devilish people you have to deal with.

How my heart rises at them all! How poorly did they design to trick you into an encouragement of Solmes, from the extorted interview!—I am very, very angry at your aunt Hervey—to give up her own judgment so tamely!—and, not content to do so, to become such an *active* instrument in their hands!—But it is so like the world!—so like my mother too!—Next to her own child, there is not anybody living she values so much as she does you.—Yet it is—Why should we embroil ourselves, Nancy, with the affairs of other people?

Other people!—How I hate the poor words, where friendship is concerned, and where the protection to be given may be of so much consequence to a friend, and of so little detriment to one's self!

I am delighted with your spirit, however. I expected it not from you. Nor did they, I am sure. Nor would *you*, perhaps, have exerted it, if Lovelace's intelligence of Solmes's nursery-offices had not set you up. I wonder not that the wretch is said to love you the better for it. What an honour would it be to him to have such a wife? And he can be even with you when you are so. He must indeed be a savage, as you say.—Yet he is less to blame for his perseverance, than those of your own family, whom most you reverence for theirs.

It is well, as I have often said, that I have not such provocations and trials; I should perhaps long ago have taken your cousin Dolly's advice—yet dare I not to touch that

key.—I shall always love the good girl for her tenderness to you.

I know not what to say to Lovelace; nor what to think of his promises, nor of his proposals to you. 'Tis certain that you are highly esteemed by all his family. The ladies are persons of unblemished honour. My Lord M. is also (as men and peers go) a man of honour. I could tell what to advise any other person in the world to do but you. So much expected from you!—Such a shining light!—Your quitting your father's house, and throwing yourself into the protection of a family, however honourable, that has a man in it, whose person, parts, declarations, and pretensions will be thought to have engaged your warmest esteem;—methinks I am rather for advising that you should get privately to London; and not to let either him, or anybody else but me, know where you are, till your cousin Morden comes.

As to going to your uncle's, that you must not do, if you can help it. Nor must you have Solmes, that's certain: not only because of his unworthiness in every respect, but because of the aversion you have so openly avowed to him; which everybody knows and talks of; as they do of your approbation of the other. For your reputation sake therefore, as well as to prevent mischief, you must either live single, or have Lovelace.

If you think of going to London, let me know; and I hope you will have *time* to allow me a further concert as to the manner of your getting away, and thither, and how to procure proper lodgings for you.

To obtain this *time*, you must palliate a little, and come into some seeming compromise, if you cannot do otherwise. Driven as you are driven, it will be strange if you are not obliged to part with a few of your admirable punctilios.

You will observe, from what I have written, that I have not succeeded with my mother.

I am extremely mortified and disappointed. We have had very strong debates upon it. But besides the narrow argument of *embroiling ourselves with other people's affairs,*

as above-mentioned, she will have it that it is your duty to comply. She says, she was *always* of opinion that daughters should implicitly submit to the will of their parents in the great article of marriage; and that she governed herself accordingly in marrying my father; who at first was more the choice of her parents than her own.

This is what she argues in behalf of her favourite Hickman, as well as for Solmes in your case.

I must not doubt but my mother always governed herself by this principle—because she *says* she did. I have likewise another reason to believe it; which you shall have, though it may not become me to give it—that they did not live so happily together, as one would hope people might do who married preferring each other at the time to the rest of the world.

Somebody shall fare never the better for this double-meant policy of my mother, I do assure you. Such a retrospection in her arguments to him, and to his address, it is but fit that *he* should suffer for *my* mortification in failing to carry a point upon which I had set my whole heart.

Think, my dear, if in any way I can serve you. If you allow of it, I protest I will go off privately with you, and we will live and die together. Think of it. Improve upon my hint, and command me.

A little interruption.—What is breakfast to the subject I am upon?

LONDON, I am told, is the best hiding-place in the world. I have written nothing but what I will stand to at the word of command. Women love to engage in knight-errantry, now and then, as well as to encourage it in the men. But in your case, what I propose will not seem to have anything of that nature in it. It will enable me to perform what is no more than a duty in serving and comforting a dear and worthy friend, who labours under undeserved oppression: and you will *ennoble*, as I may say, your Anna Howe, if you allow her to be your companion in affliction.

I will engage, my dear, we shall not be in town together

one month, before we surmount all difficulties; and this without being beholden to any men-fellows for their protection.

I must repeat what I have often said, that the authors of your persecutions would not have presumed to set on foot their selfish schemes against you, had they not depended upon the gentleness of your spirit; though now, having gone so far, and having engaged *Old* AUTHORITY in it, [chide me if you will!] neither *he* nor *they* know how to recede.

When they find you out of their reach, and know that I am with you, you'll see how they'll pull in their odious horns.

I think, however, that you should have written to your cousin Morden, the moment they had begun to treat you disgracefully.

I shall be impatient to hear whether they will attempt to carry you to your uncle's. I remember that Lord M.'s dismissed bailiff reported of Lovelace, that he had six or seven companions as bad as himself; and that the country was always glad when they left it.* He actually *has*, as I hear, such a knot of them about him now. And, depend upon it, he will not suffer them quietly to carry you to your uncle's: and whose must you be, if he succeeds in taking you from them?

I tremble for you but upon *supposing* what may be the consequence of a conflict upon this occasion. Lovelace owes some of them vengeance. This gives me a double concern that my mother should refuse her consent to the protection I had set my heart upon procuring for you.

My mother will not breakfast without me. A quarrel has its conveniences sometimes. Yet too much love, I think, is as bad as too little.

We have just now had another pull. Upon my word, she is *excessively*—what shall I say?—*unpersuadable*—I must let her off with that soft word.

* See Vol. I. Letter IV.

Who was the old Greek that said *he* governed Athens; his *wife*, him; and his *son*, her?

It was not my mother's fault [I am writing to *you*, you know] that she did not govern my *father*. But I am but a *daughter!*—Yet I thought I was not quite so powerless when I was set upon carrying a point, as I find myself to be.

Adieu, my dear!—Happier times must come—and that quickly too.—The strings cannot long continue thus overstrained. They must break or be relaxed. In either way, the certainty must be preferable to the suspense.

One word more:

I think in my conscience you must take one of these two alternatives; either to consent to let us go to London together privately [in which case, I will procure a vehicle, and meet you at your appointment at the stile to which Lovelace proposes to bring his uncle's chariot]; or, to put yourself into the protection of Lord M. and the ladies of his family.

You have another, indeed; and that is, if you are absolutely resolved against Solmes, to meet and marry Lovelace directly.

Whichsoever of these you make choice of, you will have this plea, both to yourself and to the world, that you are concluded by the same uniform principle that has governed your whole conduct, ever since the contention between Lovelace and your brother has been on foot: that is to say, that you have chosen a lesser evil, in hopes to prevent a greater.

Adieu! and Heaven direct for the best my beloved creature, prays

Her

ANNA HOWE.

—o—

LETTER V.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Thursday, April 6.

I THANK you, my dearest friend, for the pains you have taken in accounting so affectionately for my papers not being taken away yesterday; and for the kind protection you would have procured for me, if you could.

This kind protection was what I wished for: but my wishes, raised at first by your love, were rather governed by my despair of other refuge [having before cast about, and not being able to determine what I *ought* to do, and what I *could* do, in a situation so unhappy] than by a reasonable hope: for why indeed should anybody embroil themselves for others, when they can avoid it?

All my consolation is, as I have frequently said, that I have not, by my own inadvertence or folly, brought myself into this sad situation. If I *had*, I should not have dared to look up to anybody with the expectation of protection or assistance, nor to you for excuse of the trouble I give you. But nevertheless we should not be angry at a person's not doing that for ourselves, or for our friend, which she thinks she ought *not* to do; and which she has it in her option either to *do*, or to *let it alone*. Much less have you a right to be displeased with so prudent a mother, for not engaging herself so warmly in my favour as you wished she would. If my own aunt can give me up, and that against her judgment, as I may presume to say: and if my father and mother, and uncles, who once loved me so well, can join so strenuously against me; can *I* expect, or ought *you*, the protection of your mother, in *opposition* to them?

Indeed, my dear love [permit me to be *very* serious], I am afraid I am singled out (either for my own faults, or for the faults of my family, or perhaps for the faults of both) to be a very unhappy creature!—*signally* unhappy! For see

you not how irresistible the waves of affliction come tumbling down upon me?

We have been till within these few weeks, every one of us, too happy. No crosses, no vexations, but what we gave ourselves from the *pamperedness*, as I may call it, of our own wills. Surrounded by our heaps and stores, hoarded up as fast as acquired, we have seemed to think ourselves out of the reach of the bolts of adverse fate. I was the pride of all my friends, proud *myself* of *their* pride, and glorying in my standing. Who knows what the justice of Heaven may inflict, in order to convince us, that we are not out of the reach of misfortune; and to reduce us to a better reliance than what we have hitherto presumptuously made?

I should have been very little the better for the *conversation-visits* which the good Dr. Lewen used to honour me with, and for the principles *wrought* (as I may say) into my earliest mind by my pious Mrs. Norton, founded on her reverend father's experience, as well as on her own, if I could not thus retrospect and argue, in such a strange situation as we are in. *Strange*, I may well call it; for don't you see, my dear, that we seem all to be *impelled*, as it were, by a perverse fate, which none of us are able to resist?—and yet all arising (with a strong appearance of self-punishment) from ourselves? Do not my parents see the hopeful children, from whom they expected a perpetuity of worldly happiness to their branching family, now grown up to answer the *till* now distant hope, setting their angry faces against each other, pulling up by the roots, as I may say, that hope which was ready to be carried into a probable certainty?

Your partial love will be ready to acquit me of *capital* and *intentional* faults:—but oh, my dear! my calamities have humbled me enough to make me turn my gaudy eye inward; to make me look into myself.—And what have I discovered there?—Why, my dear friend, more *secret* pride and vanity than I could have thought had lain in my unexamined heart.

If *I* am to be singled out to be the *punisher* of myself and family, who so lately was the *pride* of it, pray for me, my

dear, that I may not be left wholly to myself; and that I may be enabled to support my character, so as to be *justly* acquitted of wilful and premeditated faults. The will of Providence be resigned to in the rest: as *that* leads, let me patiently and unrepiningly follow!—I shall not live always! —May but my *closing* scene be happy!

But I will not oppress you, my dearest friend, with further reflections of this sort. I will take them all into myself. Surely I have a mind that has room for them. My afflictions are too sharp to last long, The crisis is at hand. Happier times you bid me hope for. I *will* hope.

BUT yet I cannot but be impatient at times, to find myself thus driven, and my character so depreciated and sunk, that were all the *future* to be happy, I should be ashamed to show my face in public, or to look up. And all by the instigation of a selfish brother and envious sister.—

But let me stop: let me reflect!—Are not these suggestions the suggestions of the *secret* pride I have been censuring? Then, *already* so impatient! but this moment so resigned, so much better disposed for reflection! yet 'tis hard, 'tis *very* hard, to subdue an embittered spirit!—in the instant of its trial too!—Oh, my cruel brother!—but now it rises again.—I will lay down a pen I am so little able to govern.—And I will try to subdue an impatience, which (if my afflictions are sent me for corrective ends) may otherwise lead me into still more punishable errors.—

I WILL return to a subject which I cannot fly from for ten minutes together—called upon especially, as I am, by your three alternatives stated in the conclusion of your last.

As to the first; to wit, *your advice for me to escape to London*—let me tell you that the other hint or proposal which accompanies it perfectly frightens me—surely, my dear (happy as you are, and indulgently treated as your mother treats you), you cannot mean what you propose! What a wretch must I be, if, for *one* moment only, I could

lend an ear to such a proposal as this!—*I* to be the occasion of making such a mother's (perhaps *shortened*) life unhappy to the last hour of it!—*Ennoble* you, my dear creature! How must such an enterprise (the rashness *public*, the motives, were they excusable, *private*) debase you!—but I will not dwell upon the subject—for your *own* sake I will not.

As to your second alternative, *to put myself into the protection of Lord M. and of the ladies of that family*, I own to you (as I believe I have owned before), that although to do this would be the same thing in the eye of the world as putting myself into Mr. Lovelace's protection, yet I think I would do it rather than be Mr. Solmes's wife, if there were evidently no other way to avoid being so.

Mr. Lovelace, you have seen, proposes to contrive a way to put me into possession of my own house; and he tells me that he will soon fill it with the ladies of his family, as my visitors;—upon my invitation, however, to them. A very inconsiderate proposal I think it to be, and upon which I cannot explain myself to him. What an exertion of independency does it chalk out for me! How, were I to attend to *him* (and not to the natural consequences to which the following of his advice would lead me), might I be drawn by *gentle* words into the perpetration of the most *violent* acts!—For how could I gain possession, but either by legal litigation, which, were I *inclined* to have recourse to it (as I never can be), must take up time; or by forcibly turning out the persons whom my father has placed there to look after the gardens, the house, and the furniture—persons entirely attached to himself, and who, as I know, have been lately instructed by my brother?

Your third alternative, *to meet and marry Mr. Lovelace directly;* a man with whose morals I am far from being satisfied—a step that could not be taken with the least hope of ever obtaining pardon from or reconciliation with any of my friends; and against which a thousand objections rise in my mind—*that* is not to be thought of.

What appears to me, upon the fullest deliberation, the

most eligible, if I *must* be thus driven, is the escaping to London. But I would forfeit all my hopes of happiness in this life, rather than you should go away with me, as you rashly, though with the kindest intention, propose. If I could get safely thither, and be private, methinks I might remain absolutely independent of Mr. Lovelace, and at liberty either to make proposals to my friends, or, should they renounce me (and I had no other or better way), to make terms with him; supposing my cousin Morden, on his arrival, were to join with my other relations. But they would *then* perhaps indulge me in my choice of a single life, on giving him up: the renewing to them this offer, when at my own liberty, will at least convince them that I was in earnest when I made it first: and, upon my word, I *would* stand to it, dear as you seem to think, when you are disposed to rally me, it would cost me, *to* stand to it.

If, my dear, you can procure a vehicle for us *both*, you can perhaps procure one for me *singly*: but can it be done without embroiling *yourself* with your mother, or *her* with our family?—Be it coach, chariot, chaise, waggon, or horse, I matter not, provided you appear not to have a hand in my withdrawing. Only, in case it be one of the two latter, I believe I must desire you to get me an ordinary gown and coat, or habit, of some servant; having no concert with any of our own: the more ordinary the better. They must be thrust into the wood-house; where I can put them on; and then slide down from the bank that separates the wood-yard from the green lane.

But, alas! my dear, this, even *this* alternative, is not without difficulties, which, to a spirit so little enterprising as mine, seem in a manner insuperable. These are my reflections upon it.

I am afraid, in the first place, that I shall not have time for the requisite preparations for an escape.

Should I be either detected in those preparations, or pursued and overtaken in my flight, and so brought back, then would they think themselves doubly warranted to compel me to have their Solmes: and conscious of an

intended fault, perhaps I should be the less able to contend with them.

But were I even to get safely to London, I know nobody there but by name; and those the tradesmen to our family; who, no doubt, would be the first written to and engaged to find me out. And should Mr. Lovelace discover where I was, and he and my brother meet, what mischiefs might ensue between them, whether I were willing or not to return to Harlowe Place!

But supposing I could remain there concealed, to what might not my youth, my sex, and unacquaintedness of the ways of that great, wicked town, expose me!—I should hardly dare to go to church for fear of being discovered. People would wonder how I lived. Who knows but I might pass for a kept mistress; and that although nobody came to me, yet that every time I went out, it might be imagined to be in pursuance of some assignation?

You, my dear, who alone would know where to direct to me, would be watched in all your steps, and in all your messages; and your mother, at present not highly pleased with our correspondence, would then have reason to be *more* displeased. And might not differences follow between her and you, that would make me very unhappy, were I to know them? And this the more likely, as you take it so unaccountably (and, give me leave to say, so ungenerously) into your head, to revenge yourself upon the innocent Mr. Hickman for all the displeasure your mother gives you.

Were Lovelace to find out my place of abode, that would be the same thing in the eye of the world as if I had actually gone off with him. For would he, do you think, be prevailed upon to forbear visiting me? And then his unhappy character (a foolish man!) would be no credit to any young creature desirous of concealment. Indeed the world, let me escape whither, and to whomsoever I could, would conclude *him* to be the contriver of it.

These are the difficulties which arise to me on revolving this scheme; which, nevertheless, might appear surmountable to a more enterprising spirit in my circumstances.

If you, my dear, think them surmountable in any one of the cases put [and to be sure I can take no course but what must have *some* difficulty in it], be pleased to let me know your free and full thoughts upon it.

Had *you*, my dear friend, been married, then should I have had no doubt but that you and Mr. Hickman would have afforded an asylum to a poor creature more than half lost in her own apprehension for want of one kind protecting friend!

You say I should have written to my cousin Morden the moment I was treated disgracefully. But could I have believed that my friends would not have softened by degrees when they saw my antipathy to their Solmes?

I had thoughts indeed several times of writing to my cousin: but by the time an answer could have come, I imagined all would have been over, as if it had never been: so from day to day, from week to week, I hoped on: and after all, I might as reasonably fear (as I have heretofore said) that my cousin would be brought to side against me, as that some of those I have named would.

And then to appeal to a *cousin* [I must have written with *warmth* to engage him] against a *father;* this was not a desirable thing to set about. Then I had not, you know, one soul on my side; my mother herself against me. To be sure my cousin would have suspended his judgment till he could have arrived. He might not have been in haste to come, hoping the malady would cure itself: but *had* he written, his letters probably would have run in the qualifying style; to persuade *me* to submit, or *them* only to relax. Had his letters been more on *my* side than on *theirs*, they would not have regarded them: nor perhaps *himself*, had he come and been an advocate for me: for you see how strangely determined they are; how they have over-awed or got in everybody; so that no one dare open their lips in my behalf. And you have heard that my brother pushes his measures with the more violence, that all may be over with me before my cousin's expected arrival.

But you tell me, that in order to gain time, I must

palliate; that I must seem to compromise with my friends. But how *palliate?* How *seem* to compromise? You would not have me endeavour to make them believe that I will consent to what I never intended to consent to! You would not have me to gain time, with a view to *deceive!*

To *do evil, that good may come of it,* is forbidden. And shall I do evil, yet know not whether good may come of it or not?

Forbid it, Heaven! that Clarissa Harlowe should have it in her thought to *serve,* or even to *save* herself at the expense of her sincerity, and by a *studied* deceit!

And is there, after all, no way to escape one great evil, but by plunging myself into another?—What an ill-fated creature am I!—Pray for me, my dearest Nancy!—my mind is at prevent so much disturbed, that I can hardly pray for myself.

—o—

LETTER VI.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Thursday Night.

THE alarming hurry I mentioned under my date of last night, and Betty's saucy dark hints, come out to be owing to what I guessed they were; that is to say, to the private intimation Mr. Lovelace contrived our family should have of his insolent resolution [*insolent* I must call it] to prevent my being carried to my uncle's.

I saw at that time that it was as *wrong* with respect to answering his own view, as it was *insolent.* For, could he think, as Betty (I suppose from her betters) justly observed, that parents would be insulted out of their right to dispose of their own child, by a violent man whom they hate; and who could have no pretension to dispute that right with them, unless what he had from *her* who had none over herself? And how must this insolence of his, aggravated as my brother is able to aggravate it, exasperate them against me?

The rash man has indeed so far gained his point, as to intimidate them from attempting to carry me away: but he has put them upon a surer and a more desperate measure: and this has driven me also into one *as* desperate; the consequence of which, although he could not foresee it,* may perhaps too well answer his great end, little as he deserves to have it answered.

In short I have done, as far as I know, the most rash thing that ever I did in my life.

But let me give you the motive, and then the action will follow of course.

About six o'clock this evening, my aunt (who stays here all night on my account, no doubt) came up and tapped at my door; for I was writing; and had locked myself in. I opened it; and she entering, thus delivered herself:

I come once more to visit you, my dear; but sorely against my will; because it is to impart to you matters of the utmost concern to you, and to the whole family.

What, Madam, is now to be done with me? said I, wholly attentive.

You will not be hurried away to your uncle's, child: let that comfort you.—They see your aversion to go.—You will not be obliged to go to your uncle Antony's.

How you revive me, Madam! this is a cordial to my heart!

I little thought, my dear, what was to follow this supposed condescension.

And then I ran over with blessings for this good news (and she permitted me so to do, by her silence); congratulating myself that I *thought* my father could not resolve to carry things to the last extremity.——

Hold, niece, said she, at last—you must not give yourself too much joy upon the occasion neither.—Don't be surprised, my dear.—Why look you upon me, child, with so affecting an earnestness?—but you must be Mrs. Solmes, for all that.

* She was mistaken in this. Mr. Lovelace *did* foresee this consequence. All his contrivances led to it, and the whole family, as he boasts, unknown to themselves, were but so many puppets danced by his wires. See Vol. I. Letter XXXI.

I was dumb.

She then told me that they had had undoubted information, that a certain desperate *ruffian* (I must excuse her that word, she said) had prepared armed men to waylay my brother and uncles, and seize me, and carry me off.—Surely, she said, I was not consenting to a violence that might be followed by murder on one side or the other; perhaps on both.

I was still silent.

That therefore my father (still more exasperated than before) had changed his resolution as to my going to my uncle's; and was determined next Tuesday to set out thither *himself* with my mother; and that (for it was to no purpose to conceal a resolution so soon to be put in execution)—I must not dispute it any longer—on Wednesday I must give my hand—as they would have me.

She proceeded that orders were already given for a license: that the ceremony was to be performed in my own chamber, in presence of all my friends, except of my father and mother; who would not return, nor see me, till all was over, and till they had a good account of my behaviour.

The very intelligence, my dear!—the very intelligence this, which Lovelace gave me!

I was still dumb—only sighing, as if my heart would break.

She went on, comforting me, as she thought. 'She laid 'before me the merit of obedience; and told me, that if it 'were my desire that my Norton should be present at the 'ceremony, it would be complied with: that the pleasure I 'should receive from reconciling all my friends to me, and 'in their congratulations upon it, must needs overbalance, 'with such a one as me, the difference of persons, however 'preferable I might think the one man to the other: that 'love was a fleeting thing, little better than a name, where 'morality and virtue did not distinguish the object of it: 'that a choice made by its dictates was seldom happy; at 'least not *durably* so: nor was it to be wondered at, when 'it naturally exalted the object above its merits, and made

'the lover blind to faults that were visible to everybody 'else: so that when a nearer intimacy stript it of its imagi-'nary perfections, it left frequently both parties surprised, 'that they could be so grossly cheated; and that then the 'indifference became stronger than the love ever was. That 'a woman gave a man great advantages, and inspired him 'with great vanity, when she avowed her love for him, and 'preference of him; and was generally requited with inso-'lence and contempt: whereas the confessedly-obliged man, 'it was probable, would be all reverence and gratitude'— and I cannot tell what.

'You, my dear, said she, believe you shall be unhappy, if 'you have Mr. Solmes: your parents think the contrary; 'and that you will be undoubtedly so, were you to have Mr. 'Lovelace, whose morals are unquestionably bad: suppose 'it were your sad lot to be unhappy with either, let me be-'seech you to consider what great consolation you will have 'on one hand, if you pursue your parents' advice, that you 'did so; what mortification on the other, that by following 'your own, you have nobody to blame but yourself.'

This, you remember, my dear, was an argument enforced upon me by Mrs. Norton.

These and other observations which she made were worthy of my aunt Hervey's good sense and experience, and applied to almost any young creature who stood in opposition to her parents' will, but one who had offered to make the sacrifices I have offered to make, ought to have had their due weight. But although it was easy to answer some of them in my own particular case; yet having over and over, to my mother, *before* my confinement, and to my brother and sister, and even to my aunt Hervey, *since*, said what I must now have repeated, I was so much mortified and afflicted at the cruel tidings she brought me, that however attentive I was to what she said, I had neither power nor will to answer one word; and had she not stopped of herself, she might have gone on an hour longer without interruption from me.

Observing this, and that I only sat weeping, my handkerchief covering my face, and my bosom heaving ready to

burst: What! no answer, my dear?—Why so much *silent* grief? You know *I* always loved you. You know that *I* have no interest in the affair. You would not permit Mr. Solmes to acquaint you with some things which would have set your heart against Mr. Lovelace. Shall I tell you some of the matters charged against him?—Shall I, my dear?

Still I answered only by my tears and sighs.

Well, child, you shall be told these things afterwards, when you will be in a better state of mind to hear them; and then you will rejoice in the escape you will have had. It will be some excuse, then, for you to plead for your behaviour to Mr. Solmes, that you could not have believed Mr. Lovelace had been so very vile a man.

My heart fluttered with impatience and anger at being so plainly talked to as the wife of this man; but yet I then chose to be silent. If I had spoken, it would have been with vehemence.

Strange, my dear, such silence!—Your concern is infinitely more on this side the day, than it will be on the other.—But let me ask you, and do not be displeased, will you choose to see what generous stipulations for you there are in the settlements!—You have knowledge beyond your years—give the writings a perusal: do, my dear: they are engrossed, and ready for signing, and have been for some time. Excuse me, my love—I mean not to disorder you:—your father would oblige me to bring them up, and to leave them with you. He commands you to read them. *But* to read them, niece—since they are engrossed, and *were* before you made them absolutely hopeless.

And then, to my great terror, out she drew some parchments from her handkerchief, which she had kept (unobserved by me) under her apron; and rising, put them in the opposite window. Had she produced a serpent, I could not have been more frighted.

Oh! my dearest aunt, turning away my face, and holding out my hands, hide from my eyes those horrid parchments!—Let me conjure you to tell me—by all the tenderness of near relationship, and upon your honour, and by your love

for me, say, are they absolutely resolved that, come what will, I must be that man's?

My dear, you must have Mr. Solmes: indeed you must.

Indeed I never will!—This, as I have said over and over, is not originally my father's will.—Indeed I never will—and that is all I will say!

It is your father's will *now*, replied my aunt: and considering how all the family is threatened by Mr. Lovelace, and the resolution he has certainly taken to force you out of their hands, I cannot but say they are in the right, not to be bullied out of their child.

Well, Madam, then nothing remains for me to say. I am made desperate. I care not what becomes of me.

Your piety, and your prudence, my dear, and Mr. Lovelace's immoral character, together with his daring insults and threatenings, which ought to incense *you* as much as anybody, are every one's dependence. We are sure the time will come when you'll think very differently of the steps your friends take to disappoint a man who has made himself so justly obnoxious to them all.

She withdrew; leaving me full of grief and indignation:—and as much out of humour with Mr. Lovelace as with anybody; who, by his conceited contrivances, has made things worse for me than before; depriving me of the hopes I had of gaining time to receive your advice and private assistance to get to town; and leaving me no other advice, in all appearance, than either to throw myself upon his family, or to be made miserable for ever with Mr. Solmes. But I was still resolved to avoid both these evils, if possible.

I sounded Betty, in the first place (whom my aunt sent up, not thinking it proper, as Betty told me, that I should be left by myself, and who, I found, knew their designs), whether it were not probable that they would forbear, at my earnest entreaty, to push matters to the threatened extremity.

But she confirmed all my aunt said; rejoicing (as she said they all did) that Mr. Lovelace had given them so good a pretence to save me from him now and for ever.

She ran on about equipages bespoken; talked of my brother's and sister's exultations that now the whole family would soon be reconciled to each other: of the servants' joy upon it: of the expected license: of a visit to be paid me by Dr. Lewen, or another clergyman, whom they named not to *her;* which was to crown the work: and of other preparations, so particular, as made me dread that they designed to surprise me into a still nearer day than next Wednesday.

These things made me excessively uneasy. I knew not what to resolve upon.

At one time, what have I to do, thought I, but to throw myself at once into the protection of Lady Betty Lawrance? —But then, in resentment of his *fine* contrivances, which had so abominably disconcerted me, I soon resolved to the contrary: and at last concluded to ask the favour of another half-hour's conversation with my aunt.

I sent Betty to her with my request.

She came.

I put it to her, in the most earnest manner, to tell me whether I might not obtain the favour of a fortnight's respite?

She assured me it would not be granted.

Would a week? Surely a week would?

She believed a week might, if I would promise two things: the first, upon my honour, not to write a line out of the house in that week: for it was still suspected, she said, that I found means to write to *somebody*. And, secondly, to marry Mr. Solmes at the expiration of it.

Impossible! Impossible! I said with passion—What! might not I be obliged with one week, without such a horrid condition as the last?

She would go down, she said, that she might not seem of her own head to put upon me what I thought a hardship so great.

She went down: and came up again.

Did I want, was the answer, to give the vilest of men an opportunity to put his murderous schemes into execution?

—It was time for them to put an end to my obstinacy (the were tired out with me) and to his hopes at once. And a end *should* be put on Tuesday or Wednesday next, a furthest; unless I would give my honour to comply wit the condition upon which my aunt had been so good as t allow me a longer time.

I even stamped with impatience!—I called upon her t witness that I was guiltless of the consequence of this com pulsion; this *barbarous* compulsion, I called it; let tha consequence be what it would.

My aunt chid me in a higher strain than ever she di before.

While I, in a half phrensy, insisted upon seeing my father such usage, I said, set me above fear. I would rejoice t owe my death to him, as I did my life.

I did go down half way of the stairs, resolved to throw myself at his feet wherever he was.—My aunt was frighted She owned that she feared for my head.—Indeed I was i a perfect phrensy for a few minutes—but hearing m brother's voice, as talking to somebody in my sister's apart ment just by, I stopt; and heard the barbarous designer say speaking to my sister, This works charmingly, my dea Arabella!

It does! It does! said she, in an exulting accent.

Let us keep it up, said my brother.—The villain is caught i his own trap!—Now must she be what we would have her b

Do you keep my father to it; I'll take care of my mother said Bella.

Never fear, said he!—and a laugh of congratulation t each other, and derision of me (as I made it out), quit turned my frantic humour into a vindictive one.

My aunt then just coming down to me, and taking m hand, led me up, and tried to sooth me.

My raving was turned into sullenness.

She preached patience and obedience to me.

I was silent.

At last she desired me to assure her that I would offe no violence to myself.

God, I said, had given me more grace, I hoped, than to permit me to be guilty of so horrid a rashness; I was His creature, and not my own.

She then took leave of me; and I insisted upon her taking down with her the odious parchments.

Seeing me in so ill a humour, and very earnest that she should take them with her, she took them; but said that my father should not know that she did: and hoped I would better consider of the matter, and be calmer next time they were offered to my perusal.

I revolved after she was gone all that my brother and sister had said. I dwelt upon their triumphings over me; and found rise in my mind a rancour that was new to me; and which I could not withstand.—And putting everything together, dreading the near day, what could I do?—Am I in any manner excusable for what I *did* do?—If I shall be condemned by the world, who know not my provocations, may I be acquitted by you?—If *not*, I am unhappy indeed! for this I did.

Having shaken off the impertinent Betty, I wrote to Mr. Lovelace, to let him know, 'That all that was threatened 'at my uncle Antony's, was intended to be executed *here*. 'That I had come to a resolution to throw myself upon the 'protection of *either of his two aunts*, who would afford it 'me—in short, that by endeavouring to obtain leave on 'Monday to dine in the ivy summer-house, I would, if 'possible, meet him without the garden-door, at two, three, 'four, or five o'clock on Monday afternoon, as I should be 'able. That in the meantime he should acquaint me, '*whether I might hope for either of those ladies' protection*: 'and if I might, I absolutely insisted that *he should leave me* '*with either, and go to London himself or remain at Lord* 'M.'s, *nor offer to visit me till I were satisfied that nothing* '*could be done with my friends in an amicable way; and that* '*I could not obtain possession of my own estate*, and leave to 'live upon it: and particularly, *that he should not hint* '*marriage to me till I consented to hear him upon that subject*. '—I added, that if he could prevail upon one of the Misses

'Montague to *favour me with her company on the road,* i
'would make me abundantly more easy in the thoughts o
'carrying into effect a resolution which I had not come to
'although so driven, but with the utmost reluctance an
'concern; and which would throw such a slur upon m
'reputation in the eye of the world, as perhaps I shoul
'never be able to wipe off.'

This was the purport of what I wrote; and down int the garden I slid with it in the dark, which at another tim I should not have had the courage to do; and deposited it and came up again unknown to anybody.

My mind so dreadfully misgave me when I returned that to divert in some measure my increasing uneasiness I had recourse to my private pen; and in a very short tim ran this length.

And now that I am come to this part, my uneasy reflec tions begin again to pour in upon me. Yet what can I do —I believe I shall take it back again the first thing I do i the morning—Yet what *can* I do?

And who knows but they may have a still earlier day i their intention, than that which will too soon come?

I hope to deposit this early in the morning for you, as shall return from resuming my letter, if I do resume it a my *inwardest* mind bids me.

Although it is now near two o'clock, I have a good min to slide down once more, in order to take back my lette Our doors are always locked and barred up at eleven; bu the seats of the lesser hall-windows being almost even wit the ground without, and the shutters not difficult to ope I could easily get out.

Yet why should I be thus uneasy, since, should the lett go, I can but hear what Mr. Lovelace says to it? His aun live at too great a distance for him to have an immediat answer from them; so I can scruple going to them till have invitation. I can *insist* upon one of his cousins meet ing me, as I have hinted, and accompanying me in th chariot; and may he not be able to obtain that favour fro either of them. Twenty things may happen to afford me

suspension at least. Why should I be so very uneasy?—When likewise I can take back my letter early, before it is probable he will have the thought of finding it there. Yet he owns he spends three parts of his days, and has done for this fortnight past, in loitering about sometimes in one disguise, sometimes in another, besides the attendance given by his trusty servant when he himself is not *in waiting*, as he calls it.

But these strange forebodings!—Yet I can, if you advise, cause the chariot he shall bring with him to carry me directly for town, whither in my London scheme, if you were to approve it, I had proposed to go: and this will save you the trouble of procuring for me a vehicle; as well as prevent any suspicion from your mother of your contributing to my escape.

But solicitous of your advice, and approbation too, if I *can* have it, I will put an end to this letter.

Adieu, my dearest friend, adieu!

—o—

LETTER VII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Friday Morning, seven o'clock, April 7.

My aunt Hervey, who is a very early riser, was walking in the garden (Betty attending her, as I saw from my window this morning) when I arose: for after such a train of fatigue and restless nights, I had unhappily overslept myself: so all I durst venture upon was, to step down to my poultry-yard and deposit mine of yesterday and last night. And I am just come up; for she is still in the garden. This prevents me from going to resume my letter, as I think still to do; and hope it will not be too late.

I said I had unhappily overslept myself: I went to bed about half an hour after two. I told the quarters till five; after which I dropt asleep, and awaked not till past six, and

then in great terror, from a dream which has made such an impression upon me, that slightly as I think of dreams, I cannot help taking this opportunity to relate it to you.

'Methought my brother, my uncle Antony, and Mr 'Solmes had formed a plot to destroy Mr. Lovelace; whc 'discovering it, and believing I had a hand in it, turned all 'his rage against me. I thought he made them all fly tc 'foreign parts upon it; and afterwards seizing upon me 'carried me into a churchyard; and there, notwithstanding 'all my prayers and tears, and protestations of innocence 'stabbed me to the heart, and then tumbled me into a deep 'grave ready dug, among two or three half-dissolved car- 'casses; throwing in the dirt and earth upon me with his 'hands, and trampling it down with his feet.'

I awoke in a cold sweat, trembling, and in agonies and still the frightful images raised by it remain upon my memory.

But why should I, who have such *real* evils to contend with, regard *imaginary* ones? This, no doubt, was owing to my disturbed imagination; huddling together wildly all the frightful ideas which my aunt's communications and discourse, my letter to Mr. Lovelace, my own uneasiness upon it, and the apprehensions of the dreaded Wednesday furnished me with.

—o— –

Eight o'clock.

THE man, my dear, has got the letter!—What a strange diligence! I wish he mean me well, that he takes so much pains!—Yet, to be ingenuous, I must own that I should be displeased if he took less—I wish, however, he had been a hundred miles off!—What an advantage have I given him over me!

Now the letter is out of my power, I have more uneasiness and regret than I had before. For till now I had a doubt whether it should or should not go: and now I think it ought *not* to have gone. And yet is there any other way than to do as I have done, if I would avoid Solmes? But

what a giddy creature shall I be thought, if I pursue the course to which this letter must lead me?

My dearest friend, tell me, have I done wrong?—Yet do not *say* I have, if you *think* it; for should all the world besides condemn me, I shall have some comfort if *you* do not. The first time I ever besought you to flatter me. That of itself is an indication that I have done wrong, and am afraid of hearing the truth.—Oh, tell me (but yet do not tell me) if I have done wrong!

—o—

Friday, eleven o'clock.

My aunt has made me another visit. She began what she had to say with letting me know that my friends are all persuaded that I still correspond with Mr. Lovelace; as is plain, she said, by hints and menaces he throws out, which show that he is apprised of several things that have passed between my relations and me, sometimes within a very little while after they have happened.

Although I approve not of the method he stoops to take to come at his intelligence, yet it is not prudent in me to clear myself by the ruin of the corrupted servant (although his vileness has neither my connivance nor approbation), since my doing so might occasion the detection of my own correspondence; and so frustrate all the hopes I have to avoid this Solmes. Yet it is not at all unlikely that this very agent of Mr. Lovelace acts a double part between my brother and him: How else can *our family* know (so *soon* too) his menaces upon the passages they hint at?

I assured my aunt, that I was too much ashamed of the treatment I met with (and that for every one's sake as well as for my own) to acquaint Mr. Lovelace with the particulars of that treatment, even were the means of corresponding with him afforded me: that I had reason to think, that if he were to know of it from me, we must be upon such terms that he would not scruple making some visits, which would give me great apprehensions. They all knew, I said, that I had no communication with any of my father's

servants, except my sister's Betty Barnes: for although I ha a good opinion of them all, and believed, if left to their ow inclinations, that they would be glad to serve me; yet, find ing by their shy behaviour, that they were under particula direction, I had forborne, ever since my Hannah had been s disgracefully dismissed, so much as to speak to any of them for fear I should be the occasion of their losing their place too. They must, therefore, account among *themselves* fo the intelligence Mr. Lovelace met with, since neither m brother nor sister (as Betty had frequently, in praise o their open hearts, informed me), nor perhaps their favourit Mr. Solmes, were at all careful before whom they spoke when they had anything to throw out against him, or eve against *me*, whom they took great pride to join with him o this occasion.

It was but too natural, my aunt said, for my friends t suppose that he had his intelligence (part of it at least) fron me; who, thinking myself hardly treated, might complai of it, if not to him, to Miss Howe; which perhaps migh be the same thing; for they knew Miss Howe spoke a freely of them as they could do of Mr. Lovelace; and mus have the particulars she spoke of from somebody who knev what was done here. That this determined my father t bring the whole matter to a speedy issue, lest fatal conse quences should ensue.

I perceive you are going to speak with warmth, proceede she [*and so I was*]: for my own part I am sure you woul not write anything, if you *do* write, to inflame so violent spirit.—But this is not the end of my present visit.

You cannot, my dear, but be convinced that your fathe *will be obeyed.* The more you contend against his will, th more he thinks himself obliged to assert his authority. You mother desires me to tell you, that if you will give her th least hopes of a dutiful compliance, she will be willing t see you in her closet just now, while your father is gone t take a walk in the garden.

Astonishing perseverance! said I—I am tired with mak ing declarations and with pleadings on this subject; and

had hoped, that my resolution being so well known, I should not have been further urged upon it.

You mistake the purport of my present visit, Miss [looking gravely].—Heretofore you have been *desired* and *prayed* to obey and oblige your friends. *Entreaty* is at an end: they give it up. Now it is *resolved upon*, that your father's will *is to be obeyed;* as it is fit it should. Some things are laid at your door, as if you concurred with Lovelace's threatened violence to carry you off, which your mother will not believe. She will tell you her own good opinion of you. She will tell you how much she still loves you; and what she expects of you on the approaching occasion. But yet that she may not be exposed to an opposition which would the more provoke her, she desires that you will first assure her that you go down with a resolution to do that with a grace which must be done with or without a grace. And besides, she wants to give you some advice how to proceed in order to reconcile yourself to your father, and to everybody else. Will you go down, Miss Clary, or will you not?

I said I should think myself happy, could I be admitted to my mother's presence after so long a banishment from it; but that I could not wish it upon those terms.

And this is your answer, niece?

It must be my answer, Madam. Come what may, I never will have Mr. Solmes. It is cruel to press this matter so often upon me.—I never will have that man.

Down she went with displeasure. I could not help it. I was quite tired with so many attempts, all to the same purpose. I am amazed that they are not!—So little variation! and no concession on either side!

I will go down and deposit this; for Betty has seen I have been writing. The saucy creature took a napkin, and dipt it in water, and with a fleering air, Here, Miss; holding the wet corner to me.

What's that for? said I.

Only, Miss, one of the fingers of your right hand, if you please to look at it.

It was inky.

I gave her a look; but said nothing.

But lest I should have another search, I will close here.

CL. HARLOWE.

—o—

LETTER VIII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Friday, one o'clock.

I HAVE a letter from Mr. Lovelace, full of transports, vows, and promises. I will send it to you enclosed. You'll see how 'he engages in it for Lady Betty's protection, and for 'Miss Charlotte Montague's accompanying me. I have 'nothing to do but to persevere, he says, and prepare to 'receive the personal congratulations of his whole family.'

But you'll see how he presumes upon my being *his*, as the consequence of throwing myself into that lady's protection.

'The chariot and six is to be ready at the place he men-'tions. You'll see as to the slur upon my reputation, about 'which I am so apprehensive, how boldly he argues.' Generously enough, indeed, were I to be *his*; and had given him to believe that I would.—But that I have not done.

How one step brings on another with this encroaching sex; how soon may a young creature, who gives a man the least encouragement, be carried beyond her intentions, and out of her own power! You would imagine, by what he writes, that I have given him reason to think that my aversion to Mr. Solmes is all owing to my favour for him.

The dreadful thing is, that comparing what he writes from his intelligencer of what is designed against me (though he seems not to know the threatened day) with what my aunt and Betty assure me of, there can be no hope for me, but that I must be Solmes's wife if I stay here.

I had better have gone to my uncle Antony's at this rate. I should have gained time, at least, by it. This is the fruit of his fine contrivances!

When this awful court is assembled, the poor prisoner is to be brought in, supported by Mrs. Norton; who is to be first tutored to instruct me in the duty of a child; which it seems I have forgotten.

Nor is the success at all doubted, my aunt says: since it is not believed that I can be hardened enough to withstand the expostulations of so venerable a judicature, although I have withstood those of several of them separately. And still the less, as she hints at *extraordinary condescensions from my father*. But what condescensions, from even my father, can induce me to make such a sacrifice as is expected from me?

Yet my spirits will never bear up, I doubt, at such a tribunal—my father presiding in it.

Indeed I expected that my trials would not be at an end till he had admitted me into his awful presence.

What is hoped from me, she says, is, that I will cheerfully, on Tuesday night, if not before, sign the articles; and so turn the succeeding day's solemn convention into a day of festivity. I am to have the license sent me up, however, and once more the settlements, that I may see how much in earnest they are.

She further hinted that my father himself would bring up the settlements for me to sign.

Oh, my dear! what a trial will this be!—How shall I be able to refuse my father the writing of my name?—To my father, from whose presence I have been so long banished!—He commanding and entreating, perhaps, in a breath!—How shall I be able to refuse this to my father?

They are sure, she says, something is working on Mr. Lovelace's part, and perhaps on mine: and my father would sooner follow me to the grave than see me *his* wife.

I said I was not well: that the very apprehensions of these trials were already insupportable to me; and would increase upon me, as the time approached; and I was afraid I should be extremely ill.

They had prepared themselves for such an *artifice* as that, was my aunt's unkind word; and she could assure me, it would stand me in no stead.

Artifice! repeated I: and this from my aunt Hervey?

Why, my dear, said she, do you think people are fools? —Can they not see how dismally you endeavour to sigh yourself down within-doors?—How you hang down your *sweet face* [those were the words she was pleased to use] upon your bosom?—How you totter, as it were, and hold by this chair, and by that door post, when you know that anybody sees you? [This, my dear Miss Howe, is an aspersion to fasten hypocrisy and contempt upon me: my brother's or sister's aspersion!—I am not capable of arts so low.] . But the moment you are down with your poultry, or advancing upon your garden-walk, and, as you imagine, out of everybody's sight, it is seen how nimbly you trip along; and what an alertness governs all your motions.

I should hate myself, said I, were I capable of such poor *artifices* as these. I must be a fool to use them, as well as a mean creature; for have I not had experience enough that my friends are incapable of being moved in much more *affecting instances?*—But you'll see how I shall be by Tuesday.

My dear, you will not offer any violence to your health? —I hope God has given you more grace than to do that.

I hope He has, Madam. But there is violence enough offered, and threatened, to affect my health; and so it will be found, without my needing to have recourse to any other, or to *artifice* either.

I'll only tell you one thing, my dear: and that is, ill or well, the ceremony will probably be performed before Wednesday night:—but this, also, I will tell you, although beyond my present commission, that Mr. Solmes will be under an engagement (if you should require it of him as a favour) after the ceremony is passed, and Lovelace's hopes thereby utterly extinguished, to leave you at your father's, and return to his own house every evening, until you are brought to a full sense of your duty, and consent to acknowledge your change of name.

There was no opening of my lips to such a speech as this. I was dumb.

And these, my dear Miss Howe, are they who, *some* of them at least, have called me a romantic girl!—This is my chimerical brother and wise sister; both joining their heads together, I daresay. And yet, my aunt told me that the last part was what took in my mother: who had, till that expedient was found out, insisted that her child should not be married, if, through grief or opposition, she should be ill or fall into fits.

This intended violence my aunt often excused, by the certain information they pretended to have of some plots or machinations, that were ready to break out, from Mr. Lovelace:* the effects of which were thus cunningly to be frustrated.

—o—

Friday, nine o'clock.

And now, my dear, what shall I conclude upon? You see how determined—but how can I expect your advice will come time enough to stand me in any stead? For here I have been down, and already have another letter from Mr. Lovelace [*the man lives upon the spot, I think*]: and I must write to him, either that I will or will not stand to my first resolution of escaping hence on Monday next. If I let him know that I will not (appearances so strong *against* him and *for* Solmes, even stronger than when I made the appointment), will it not be justly deemed my own fault, if I am compelled to marry their odious man? And if any mischief ensue from Mr. Lovelace's rage and disappointment, will it not lie at my door?—Yet, he offers so fair!—Yet, on the other hand, to incur the censure of the world, as a giddy creature—but that, as he hints, I have already incurred.—What can I do?—Oh! that my cousin Morden—but what signifies wishing?

I will here give you the substance of Mr. Lovelace's letter. The letter itself I will send, when I have answered it; but that I will defer doing as long as I can, in hopes

* It may not be amiss to observe in this place, that Mr. Lovelace artfully contrived to drive the family on, by permitting *his* and *their* agent Leman to report machinations which he had neither intention nor power to execute.

of finding reason to retract an appointment on which so much depends. And yet it is necessary you should have all before you as I go along, that you may be the better able to advise me in this dreadful crisis.

'He begs my pardon for writing with so much assur-'ance; attributing it to his unbounded transport; and 'entirely acquiesces in my will. He is full of alternatives 'and proposals. He offers *to attend me directly to Lady 'Betty's;* or, if I had rather, *to my own estate;* and that 'my Lord M. shall protect me there.' [He knows not, my dear, my reasons for rejecting this inconsiderate advice.] 'In either case, as soon as he sees me safe, he will go up to 'London, or whither I please, and not come near me, 'but by my own permission, and till I am satisfied in 'everything I am doubtful of, as well with regard to his 'reformation, as to settlements, &c.

'To *conduct me to you,* my dear, is another of his pro-'posals, not doubting, he says, but your mother will receive 'me:* or, if that be not agreeable to you, or to your 'mother, or to me, he will put me *into Mr. Hickman's* 'protection; whom, no doubt he says, you can influence; 'and that it may be given out that I am gone to Bath, 'or Bristol, or abroad; wherever I please.

'Again, if it be more agreeable, he proposes *to attend 'me privately to London,* where he will procure handsome 'lodgings for me, and *both his cousins Montague to receive 'me in them, and to accompany me till all shall be adjusted 'to my mind;* and *till a reconciliation shall be effected:* 'which he assures me nothing shall be wanting in him to 'facilitate, greatly as he has been insulted by all my family.

'These several measures he proposes to my choice; as 'it was unlikely, he says, that he could procure, *in the time,* 'a letter from Lady Betty, under her own hand, to invite 'me in form to her house, unless he had been himself to 'go to that lady for it; which, at this critical conjuncture, 'while he is attending my commands, is impossible.

'He conjures me, in the most solemn manner, if I

* See the note in page 320 of vol. i.

'would not throw him into utter despair, to keep to my 'appointment.

'However, instead of threatening my relations, or 'Solmes, if I recede, he respectfully says that he doubts 'not but that, if I *do*, it will be upon such reasons as 'he ought to be satisfied with; upon no slighter, he hopes, 'than their leaving me at full liberty to pursue my own 'inclinations: in which (whatever they shall be) he will 'entirely acquiesce; only endeavouring *to make his future 'good behaviour the sole ground for his expectation of my 'favour.*

'In short, he solemnly vows that his *whole* view, at 'present, is to free me from my imprisonment; and to 'restore me to my own free will in a point so absolutely 'necessary to my future happiness. He declares that 'neither the hopes he has of my future favour, nor the 'consideration of his own and family's honour, will permit 'him to propose anything *that shall be inconsistent with my 'own most scrupulous notions:* and, for my mind's sake, 'should choose to have the proposed end obtained by my 'friends declining to compel me. But that nevertheless, 'as to the world's opinion, it is impossible to imagine that 'the behaviour of my relations to me has not already 'brought upon my family those free censures which they 'deserve, and caused the step which I am so scrupulous 'about taking, to be no other than the *natural* and *expected* 'consequence of their treatment of me.'

Indeed I am afraid all this is true: and it is owing to some little degree of politeness, that Mr. Lovelace does not say all he might say on this subject: for I have no doubt that I am the talk, and perhaps the bye-word, of half the county. If so, I am afraid I can now do nothing that will give me more disgrace than I have already so causelessly received by their indiscreet persecutions: and let me be whose I will, and do what I will, I shall never wipe off the stain which my confinement, and the rigorous usage I have received, have fixed upon me; at least in my own opinion.

I wish, if ever I am to be considered as one of the emi-

nent family this man is allied to, some of them do not think the worse of me for the disgrace I have received. In that case, perhaps I shall be obliged to him, if *he* do not. You see how much this harsh, this cruel treatment from my own family has humbled me! But perhaps I was too much exalted before.

Mr. Lovelace concludes 'with repeatedly begging an 'interview with me; and that, *this* night, if possible: 'an hour, he says, he is the more encouraged to solicit 'for, as I had twice before made him hope for it. But 'whether he obtain it or not, he beseeches me to choose 'one of the alternatives he offers to my acceptance; and 'not to depart from my resolution of escaping on Monday, 'unless the reason ceases on which I had taken it up; and 'that I have a prospect of being restored to the favour of 'my friends; at least to my own liberty, and freedom of 'choice.'

He renews all his vows and promises on this head in so earnest and so solemn a manner, that (his own *interest*, and his family's *honour*, and their *favour* for me, co-operating) I can have no room to doubt of his sincerity.

—o—

LETTER IX.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Saturday Morning, eight o'clock, April 8.

WHETHER you will blame me or not, I cannot tell, but I have deposited a letter confirming my resolution to leave this house on Monday next, within the hour mentioned in my former, if possible. I have not kept a copy of it. But this is the substance:

I tell him, 'That I have no way to avoid the deter- 'mined resolution of my friends in behalf of Mr. Solmes, 'but by abandoning this house by his assistance.'

I have not pretended to make a merit with him on this

score; for I plainly tell him, 'That could I, *without an* 'unpardonable sin, die when I *would*, I would sooner make 'death my choice, than take a step which all the world, 'if not my own heart, would condemn me for taking.'

I tell him, 'That I shall not try to bring any other 'clothes with me than those I shall have on; and those 'but my common wearing-apparel; lest I should be sus- 'pected. That I must expect to be denied the possession 'of my estate: but that I am determined never to consent 'to a litigation with my father, were I to be reduced to 'ever so low a state: so that the protection I am to be 'obliged for to any one, must be alone for the distress' sake. 'That therefore he will have nothing to hope for from 'this step *that he had not before:* and that in every light I 'reserve to myself to *accept or refuse his address, as his* 'behaviour and circumspection shall appear to me to deserve.'

I tell him, 'That I think it best to go into a private 'lodging, in the neighbourhood of Lady Betty Lawrance; 'and not to her ladyship's house; that it may not appear 'to the world *that I have refuged myself in his family:* 'and that a reconciliation with my friends may not, on 'that account, be made impracticable: that I will send for 'thither my faithful Hannah, and apprise only Miss 'Howe where I am: that *he shall instantly leave me,* and 'go to London, or to one of Lord M.'s seats; and (as he 'had promised) not come near me, but by my leave, 'contenting himself with a correspondence by letter only.

'That if I find myself in danger of being discovered, 'and carried back by violence, I will then throw myself 'directly into the protection either of Lady Betty or Lady 'Sarah: but *this only in case of absolute necessity;* for that 'it will be more to my reputation, for me, by the best 'means I can (taking advantage of my privacy), to enter 'by a second or third hand *into a treaty of reconciliation* 'with my friends.

'That I must, however, plainly tell him, that if, in 'this treaty, my friends *insist upon my resolving against* 'marrying him, I will engage to comply with them; pro-

'vided they will allow me to promise him *that I will never* '*be the wife of any other man while he remains single, or is* '*living;* that this is a compliment I am willing to pay him, 'in return for the trouble and pains he has taken, and the 'usage he has met with on my account: although I inti-'mate that he may, in a great measure, thank himself (by 'reason of the little regard he has paid to his reputation) for 'the slights he has met with.'

I tell him, 'That I may, in this privacy, write to my 'cousin Morden, and if possible, interest him in my cause.

'I take some brief notice then of his alternatives.'

You must think, my dear, that this unhappy force upon me, and this projected flight, make it necessary for me to account to him much sooner than I should otherwise choose to do, for every part of my conduct.

'It is not to be expected, I tell him, that your mother 'will embroil herself, or suffer you or Mr. Hickman to be 'embroiled, on my account: and as to his proposal of my 'going to London, I am such an absolute stranger to every-'body there, and have such a bad opinion of the place, that 'I cannot by any means think of going thither; except I 'should be induced, some time hence, by the ladies of his 'family to attend them.

'As to the meeting he is desirous of, I think it by no 'means proper; especially as it is so likely that I may 'soon see him. But that if anything occurs to induce me 'to change my mind, as to withdrawing, I will *then take* '*the first opportunity to see him, and give him my reasons for* '*that change.*'

This, my dear, I the less scrupled to write, as it might qualify him to bear such a disappointment, should I give it him; he having besides behaved so very unexceptionably when he surprised me some time ago in the lonely wood-house.

Finally, 'I commend myself, as a person in distress, and '*merely as such,* to *his* honour, and to the protection of the 'ladies of his family. I repeat [most cordially, I am sure!] 'my deep concern for being forced to take a step so dis-

'agreeable, and so derogatory to my honour. And having 'told him that I will endeavour to obtain leave to dine in 'the ivy summer-house,* and to send Betty off some errand, 'when there, I leave the rest to him; but imagine that 'about four o'clock will be a proper time for him to con- 'trive some signal to let me know he is at hand, and for me 'to unbolt the garden door.'

I added by way of postscript, 'That their suspicions 'seeming to increase, I advise him to contrive to send 'or come to the usual place, as frequently as possible, in 'the interval of time till Monday morning ten or eleven 'o'clock; as something may possibly happen to make me 'alter my mind.'

Oh, my dear Miss Howe!—what a sad, sad thing is the necessity forced upon me, for all this preparation and contrivance!—But it is now too late!—But how!—*Too late*, did I say?—What a word is *that!*—What a dreadful thing, *were* I to repent, to *find* it to be too late to remedy the apprehended evil!

—o—

Saturday, ten o'clock.

MR. SOLMES is here. He is to dine with his new relations, as Betty tells me he already calls them.

He would have thrown himself in my way once more: but I hurried up to my prison, in my return from my garden-walk, to avoid him.

I had, when in the garden, the curiosity to see if my letter were gone: I cannot say with an intention to take it back again if it were not, because I see not how I could

* The *ivy summer-house* (or *ivy bower*, as it was sometimes called in the family) was a place that from a girl this young lady delighted in. She used in the summer months frequently to sit and work, and read, and write, and draw, and (when permitted) to breakfast, and dine, and sometimes to sup in it; especially when Miss Howe, who had an equal liking to it, was her visitor and guest.

She describes it, in another letter (which appears not), as 'pointing to a 'pretty variegated landscape of wood, water, and hilly country; which had 'pleased her so much, that she had drawn it; the piece hanging up, in her 'parlour, among some of her other drawings.'

do otherwise than I have done; yet, what a caprice! when I found it gone, I began (as yesterday morning) to wish it had not: for no other reason, I believe, than because it was out of my power.

A strange diligence in this man!—He *says* he almost lives upon the place; and I think so too.

He mentions, as you will see in his letter, four several disguises, which he puts on in one day. It is a wonder, nevertheless, that he has not been seen by some of our tenants: for it is impossible that any disguise can hide the gracefulness of his figure. But this is to be said, that the adjoining grounds being all in our own hands, and no common footpaths near that part of the garden, and through the park and coppice, nothing can be more bye and unfrequented.

Then they are less watchful, I believe, over my garden-walks, and my poultry-visits, depending, as my aunt hinted, upon the bad character they have taken so much pains to fasten upon Mr. Lovelace. This, they think (and *justly* think), must fill me with doubts. And then the regard I have hitherto had for my reputation is another of their securities. Were it not for these two, they would not surely have used me as they have done; and at the same time left me the opportunities which I have several times had to get away, had I been disposed to do so: * and indeed their dependence on both these motives would have been well founded, had they kept but tolerable measures with me.

Then perhaps they have no notion of the back-door, as it is seldom opened, and leads to a place so pathless and lonesome.† If not, there *can* be no other way to escape (if

* They might, no doubt, make a dependence upon the reasons she gives: but their chief reliance was upon the vigilance of their Joseph Leman; little imagining what an implement he was of Mr. Lovelace.

† This, in another of her letters (which neither is inserted) is thus described:—'A piece of ruins upon it, the remains of an old chapel, now standing in the midst of the coppice; here and there an overgrown oak, surrounded with ivy and misletoe, starting up, to sanctify, as it were, the awful solemnness of the place: a spot, too, where a man having been found hanging some years ago, it was used to be thought of by us when children, and by the

one would) unless by the plashy lane, so full of springs, by which your servant reaches the solitary wood-house; to which lane one must descend from a high bank that bounds the poultry-yard. For as to the front-way, you know one must pass through the house to that, and in sight of the parlours, and the servants' hall; and then have the open courtyard to go through, and by means of the iron gate, be full in view, as one passes over the lawn, for a quarter of a mile together; the young plantations of elms and limes affording yet but little shade or covert.

The ivy summer-house is the most convenient for this heart-affecting purpose of any spot in the garden, as it is not far from the back-door, and yet in another alley, as you may remember. Then it is seldom resorted to by anybody else, except in the summer months, because it is cool. When they loved me, they would often, for this reason, object to my long continuance in it:—but now it is no matter what becomes of me. Besides, *cold is a bracer*, as my brother said yesterday.

Here I will deposit what I have written. Let me have your prayers, my dear; and your approbation, or your censure, of the steps I have taken: for yet it may not be quite too late to revoke the appointment. I am

Your most affectionate and faithful

CL. HARLOWE.

Why will you send your servant empty-handed?

'maid-servants, with a degree of terror (it being actually the habitation of 'owls, ravens, and other ominous birds), as haunted by ghosts, goblins, 'spectres: the genuine result of the country loneliness and ignorance: notions 'which, early propagated, are apt to leave impressions even upon minds grown 'strong enough at the same time to despise the like credulous follies in 'others.'

—o—

LETTER X.

Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

Saturday Afternoon.

By your last date of ten o'clock in your letter of this day, you could not long have deposited it before Robin took it. He rode hard, and brought it to me just as I had risen from table.

You may justly blame me for sending my messenger empty-handed, your situation considered; and yet that very situation (so critical!) is partly the reason for it: for indeed I knew not what to write, fit to send you.

I have been inquiring privately how to procure you a conveyance from Harlowe Place, and yet not appear in it; knowing that to oblige in the *fact*, and to disoblige in the *manner*, is but obliging by halves: my mother being moreover very suspicious, and very uneasy; made more so by daily visits from your uncle Antony; who tells her that everything is now upon the point of being determined; and hopes that her daughter will not so interfere as to discourage your compliance with their wills. This I came at by a way that I cannot take notice of, or *both* should hear of it in a manner *neither* would like: and, *without* that, my mother and I have had almost hourly bickerings.

I found more difficulty than I expected (as the time was confined, and secrecy required, and as you so earnestly forbid me to accompany you in your enterprise) in procuring you a vehicle. Had you not obliged me to keep measures with my mother, I could have managed it with ease. I could even have taken our own chariot, on one pretence or other, and put two horses extraordinary to it, if I had thought fit; and I could, when we had got to London, have sent it back, and nobody the wiser as to the lodgings we might have taken.

I wish to the Lord you had permitted this. Indeed I think you are too punctilious a great deal for your situation.

Would you expect to enjoy yourself with your usual placidness, and not to be ruffled in a hurricane which every moment threatens to blow your house down?

Had your distress sprung from yourself, that would have been another thing. But when all the world knows where to lay the fault, this alters the case.

How can you say I am happy, when my mother, to her power, is as much an abettor of their wickedness to my dearest friend, as your aunt, or anybody else?—and this through the instigation of that odd-headed and foolish uncle of yours, who [sorry creature that he is!] keeps her up to resolutions which are unworthy of her, for an example to me, if it please you. Is not this cause enough for me to ground a resentment upon, sufficient to justify me for accompanying you; the friendship between us so well known?

Indeed, my dear, the importance of the case considered, I must repeat that you are too nice. Don't they already think that your non-compliance with their odious measures is owing a good deal to my advice? Have they not prohibited our correspondence upon that very surmise? And have I, but on *your* account, reason to value *what* they think?

Besides, what discredit have I to fear by such a step? What detriment? Would Hickman, do you believe, refuse me upon it?—If he did, should I be sorry for that?—Who is it, that has a soul, who would not be affected by such an instance of female friendship?

But I should vex and disorder my mother!—Well, that is something: but not more than she vexes and disorders me, on her being made an implement by such a sorry creature, who ambles hither every day in spite to my dearest friend—Woe be to *both*, if it be for a *double end!*—Chide me, if you will: I don't care.

I say, and I insist upon it, such a step would *ennoble* your friend: and if still you will permit it, I will take the office out of Lovelace's hands; and to-morrow evening, or on Monday before his time of appointment takes place, will come in a chariot, or chaise: and then, my dear, if

we get off as I wish, will we make terms (and what terms we please) with them all. My mother will be glad to receive her daughter again, I warrant: and Hickman will cry for *joy* on my return; or he shall for *sorrow*.

But you are so very earnestly angry with me for proposing such a step, and have always so much to say for your side of *any* question, that I am afraid to urge it farther. —Only be so good (let me add) as to encourage me to resume it, if, upon farther consideration, and upon weighing matters well (and in *this* light, whether best to go off with *me*, or with *Lovelace*), you can get over your punctilious regard for my reputation. A woman going away with a *woman* is not so discreditable a thing, surely! and with no view but to *avoid the fellows!*—I say, only be so good as to *consider* this point; and if you *can* get over your scruples on *my* account, do. And so I will have done with this argument for the present; and apply myself to some of the passages in yours.

A time, I hope, will come, that I shall be able to read your affecting narratives without that impatient bitterness which now boils over in my heart, and would flow to my pen, were I to enter into the particulars of what you write. And indeed I am afraid of giving you my advice at all, or telling you what I should do in your case (supposing you will still refuse my offer; finding too what you have been brought or rather driven to without it); lest any evil should follow it: in which case, I should never forgive myself. And this consideration has added to my difficulties in writing to you now you are upon such a crisis, and yet refuse the *only* method—but I said I would not for the present touch any more that string. Yet, one word more, chide me if you please: if any harm betide you, I shall for ever blame my mother—indeed I shall—and perhaps yourself, if you do not accept of my offer.

But one thing, in your present situation and prospects, let me advise: it is this, that if you *do* go off with Mr. Lovelace, you take the first opportunity to marry. Why should you *not*, when everybody will know by *whose* assist-

ance, and in *whose* company, you leave your father's house, go whithersoever you will?—You may indeed keep him at a distance until settlements are drawn, and such like matters are adjusted to your mind: but even these are matters of less consideration in your particular case, than they would be in that of most others: and first, *because*, be his other faults what they will, nobody thinks him an ungenerous man: next, *because* the possession of your estate must be given up to you as soon as your cousin Morden comes; who, as your trustee, will see it done; and done upon proper terms: thirdly, *because* there is no want of fortune on his side: fourthly, *because* all his family value you, and are extremely desirous that you should be their relation: fifthly, *because* he makes no scruple of accepting you without conditions. You see how he has always defied your relations [I, for my own part, can forgive him for the fault: nor know I, if it be not a noble one]: and I daresay he had rather call you *his*, without a shilling, than be under obligation to those whom he has full as little reason to love, as they have to love him. You have heard that his own relations cannot make his proud spirit submit to owe any favour to them.

For all these reasons, I think, you may the less stand upon previous settlements. It is therefore my absolute opinion, that if you *do* withdraw with him (and in that case you must let *him* be judge when he can leave you with safety, *you'll observe that*), you should not postpone the ceremony.

Give this matter your most serious consideration. Punctilio is out of doors the moment you are out of your father's house. I know how justly severe you have been upon those inexcusable creatures, whose giddiness and even want of decency have made them, in the *same hour* as I may say, leap from a parent's window to a husband's bed—but considering Lovelace's character, I repeat my opinion, that your *reputation* in the eye of the world requires that no delay be made in *this* point, when once you are in his power.

I need not, I am sure, make a stronger plea to *you*.

You say, in excuse for my mother (what my fervent love

for my friend very ill brooks), that we ought not to blame any one for not doing what she has an option to do, or to let alone. This, in cases of friendship, would admit of very strict discussion. If the thing requested be of *greater* consequence, or even of *equal*, to the person sought to, and it were, as the old phrase has it, *to take a thorn out of one's friend's foot to put it into one's own*, something might be said.—Nay, it would be, I will venture to say, a selfish thing in us to ask a favour of a friend which would subject that friend to the *same* or *equal* inconvenience as that from which we wanted to be relieved, the requested would, in this case, teach his friend, by his *own* selfish example, with much *better* reason, to deny him, and despise a friendship so *merely* nominal. But if, by a *less* inconvenience to ourselves, we could relieve our friend from a *greater*, the refusal of such a favour makes the refuser unworthy of the name of a friend: nor would I admit such a one, not even into the *outermost* fold of my heart.

I am well aware that this is your opinion of friendship, as well as mine: for I owe the distinction to you, upon a certain occasion; and it saved me from a very great inconvenience, as you must needs remember. But you were always for making excuses for *other* people, in cases wherein you would not have allowed of one for *yourself*.

I must own, that were these excuses for a friend's indifference, or denial, made by anybody but *you*, in a case of such *vast* importance to herself, and of so comparative a *small* one to those for whose protection she would be thought to wish; I, who am for ever, as you have often remarked, endeavouring to trace effects to their causes, should be ready to suspect that there was a latent, unowned inclination, which balancing, or *preponderating* rather, made the issue of the alternative (however important) sit more lightly upon the excuser's mind than she cared to own.

You will understand me, my dear. But if you do not, it may be as well for me; for I am afraid I shall *have it* from you for but starting such a notion, or giving a hint, which perhaps, as you did once in another case, you will

reprimandingly call 'Not being able to forego the ostenta-'tion of sagacity, though at the expense of that tenderness 'which is due to friendship and charity.'

What signifies owning a fault without mending it, you'll say?—Very true, my dear. But you know I ever was a saucy creature—ever stood in need of great allowances.—And I remember, likewise, that I ever had them from my dear Clarissa. Nor do I doubt them now: for you know how much I love you—if it be possible, *more* than *myself* I love you! Believe me, my dear: and in consequence of that belief, you will be able to judge how much I am affected by your present distressful and critical situation; which will not suffer me to pass by without a censure even that *philosophy* of temper in your own cause, which you have not in another's, and which all that know you ever admired you for.

From this critical and distressful situation, it shall be my hourly prayers that you may be delivered without blemish to that fair fame which has hitherto, like your heart, been unspotted.

With this prayer, twenty times repeated, concludes

Your ever affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

I hurried myself in writing this; and I hurry Robin away with it, that in a situation so very critical you may have all the time possible to consider what I have written, upon two points so very important. I will repeat them in a very few words:

'Whether you choose not rather to go off with one of *your* '*own sex;* with your ANNA HOWE—than with one of 'the *other*; with Mr. LOVELACE?'

And if *not,*

'Whether you should not marry him as soon as possible?'

—o—

LETTER XI.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

[The preceding Letter not received.]

Saturday Afternoon.

ALREADY have I an ecstatic answer, as I may call it, t
my letter.

'He promises compliance with my will in every article
'approves of all I propose; particularly of the privat
'lodging: and thinks it a happy expedient to obviate th
'censures of the busy and the unreflecting: and yet h
'hopes, that the putting myself into the protection of eithe
'of his aunts (treated as I am treated), would be far fro
'being looked upon by anybody in a disreputable ligh
'But everything I enjoin or resolve upon must, he says, b
'right, not only with respect to my present but futu
'reputation; with regard to which, he hopes so to beha
'himself, as to be *allowed* to be, next to myself, more *pr*
'*perly* solicitous than anybody. He will only assure m
'that his whole family are extremely desirous to take adva
'tage of the persecutions I labour under to make their cour
'and endear themselves to me, by their best and mo
'cheerful services: happy if they can in any measure co
'tribute to my present freedom and future happiness.

'He will this afternoon, he says, write to Lord M. ar
'to Lady Betty and Lady Sarah, that he is now with
'view of being the happiest man in the world, if it be n
'his own fault; since the only woman upon earth that ca
'make him so will be soon out of danger of being anoth
'man's; and cannot possibly prescribe any terms to hi
'that he shall not think it his duty to comply with.

'He flatters himself now (my last letter *confirming* m
'resolution) that he can be in no apprehension of m
'changing my mind, unless my friends change their ma
'ner of acting by me; which he is too sure they w

'not.* And now will all his relations, who take such a 'kind and generous share in his interests, glory and pride 'themselves in the prospects he has before him.'

Thus artfully does he hold me to it.

'As to fortune, he begs of me not to be solicitous on 'that score: that his own estate is sufficient for us both; 'not a *nominal*, but a *real*, two thousand pounds *per annum*, 'equivalent to some estates reputed a third more: that it 'never was encumbered; that he is clear of the world, both 'as to book and bond debts; thanks, perhaps, to his *pride*, 'more than to his *virtue:* that Lord M. moreover resolves 'to settle upon him a thousand pounds *per annum* on his 'nuptials. And to this, he will have it, his lordship is 'instigated more by motives of *justice* than of *generosity;* 'as he must consider it was but an equivalent for an estate 'which he had got possession of, to which *his* (Mr. Love-'lace's) mother had better pretensions. That his lordship 'also proposed to give him up either his seat in Hertford-'shire, or that in Lancashire, at his own or at his wife's 'option, especially if I am the person. All which it will 'be in my power to see done, and proper settlements drawn, '*before* I enter into any farther engagements with him; if 'I will have it so.'

He says, 'That I need not be under any solicitude as to '*apparel:* all *immediate* occasions of that sort will be most 'cheerfully supplied by the ladies of his family: as my 'others shall, with the greatest pride and pleasure (if I 'allow him that honour) by himself.

'He assures me that I shall govern him as I please, 'with regard to anything in *his* power towards effecting 'a reconciliation with my friends:' a point he knows my heart is set upon.

'He is afraid that the time will hardly allow of his pro-'curing Miss Charlotte Montague's attendance upon me, 'at St. Alban's, as he had proposed she should; because

* Well he might be so sure, when he had the art to play them off, by his corrupted agent, and to make them all join to promote his views unknown to themselves; as is shown in some of his preceding letters.

'he understands she keeps her chamber with a violent cold 'and sore throat. But both she and her sister, the first 'moment she is able to go abroad, shall visit me at my 'private lodgings; and introduce me to Lady Sarah and 'Lady Betty, or those ladies to me, as I shall choose; and 'accompany me to town, if I please; and stay as long in 'it with me as I shall think fit to stay there.

'Lord M. will also, at my own time, and in my own '*manner* (that is to say, either publicly or privately), make 'me a visit. And for his own part, when he has seen me 'in safety, either in their protection, or in the privacy I 'prefer, he will leave me, and not attempt to visit me but 'by my own permission.

'He had thought once, he says, on hearing of his cousin 'Charlotte's indisposition, to have engaged his cousin 'Patty's attendance upon me, either in or about the 'neighbouring village, or at St. Alban's: but he says 'she is a low-spirited, timorous girl, and would but the 'more have perplexed us.'

So, my dear, the enterprise requires courage and high spirits, you see!—And indeed it does!—What am I about to do!

He himself, it is plain, thinks it necessary that I should be accompanied with one of my own sex.—He might, at least, have proposed the woman of one of the ladies of his family.—Lord bless me!—What am I about to do!

AFTER all, as far as I have gone, I know not but I may still recede: and, if I do, a mortal quarrel I suppose will ensue.—And what if it does?—Could there be any way to escape this Solmes, a breach with Lovelace might make way for the single life to take place, which I so much prefer: and then I would defy the sex. For I see nothing but trouble and vexation that they bring upon ours: and when once entered, one is obliged to go on with them, treading, with tender feet, upon thorns, and sharper thorns, to the end of a painful journey.

What to do I know not. The more I think, the more

I am embarrassed!—And the stronger will be my doubts as the appointed time draws near.

But I will go down, and take a little turn in the garden; and deposit this, and his letters all but the two last, which I will enclose in my next, if I have opportunity to write another.

Meantime, my dear friend——But what can I desire you to pray for?—Adieu, then!—Let me only say—Adieu!—

—o—

LETTER XII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

[In answer to Letter X.]

Sunday Morning, April 9.

Do not think, my beloved friend, although you have given me in yours of yesterday a *severer* instance of what, nevertheless, I must call your *impartial* love, than ever yet I received from you, that I will be displeased with you for it. That would be to put myself into the inconvenient situation of royalty: that is to say, *out of the way* of ever being told of my faults; of ever mending them: and *in the way* of making the sincerest and warmest friendship useless to me.

And then how brightly, how nobly glows in your bosom the sacred flame of friendship; since it can make you ready to impute to the unhappy sufferer a *less degree* of warmth in *her own* cause, than *you* have for her, because she endeavours to divest herself of *self* so far as to leave others to the option which they have a right to make!—Ought I, my dear, to blame, ought I not rather to admire you for this ardour?

But nevertheless, lest you should think that there is any foundation for a surmise which (although it owe its rise to *your* friendship) would, if there *were*, leave *me* utterly inexcusable, I must, in justice to myself, declare that I

know not my own heart if I have any of that *latent* *unowned inclination*, which you would impute to *any oth but me.* Nor does the *important alternative sit lightly* *my mind.* And yet I must excuse your mother, were but on this single consideration, that I could not presun to reckon upon *her* favour, as I could upon *her daughter* so as to make the claim of friendship upon *her*, to whor as the mother of my dearest friend, a veneration is owin which can hardly be compatible with that sweet familiari which is one of the indispensable requisites of the sacr tie by which your heart and mine are bound in one.

What therefore I might expect from my *Anna Hou* I *ought not* from her *mother;* for would it not be ve strange that a person of her experience should be reflect upon because she gave not up her own judgment, whe the consequence of her doing so would be to embroil he self, as she apprehends, with a family she has lived w with, and in behalf of a child against her parents?—as sl has moreover a daughter of her own:—a daughter to give me leave to say, of whose vivacity and charming spiri she is more apprehensive than she need to be, because h truly maternal cares make her fear more from her *you* than she hopes from her *prudence:* which, nevertheles she and all the world know to be *beyond* her years.

And here let me add, that whatever you may generousl and as the result of an ardent affection for your unhapı friend, urge on this head, in my behalf, or harshly again any one who may refuse me protection in the extraord nary circumstances I find myself in, I have some pleasu in being able to curb undue expectations upon my indu gent friends, whatever were to befal myself from those ci cumstances, for I should be extremely mortified, were I t my selfish forwardness to give occasion for such a chec as to be told that I had encouraged an unreasonable hop or, according to the phrase you mention, wished to take *thorn out of my own foot, and to put it into that of my frien* Nor should I be better pleased with myself, if, having bee taught by my good Mrs. Norton that the best of schoo

is *that of affliction,* I should rather learn impatience than the contrary, by the lessons I am obliged to get by heart in it; and if I should judge of the *merits of others,* as they were *kind to me:* and that at the expense of their own convenience or peace of mind. For is not this to suppose myself ever in the right; and all who do not act as I would have them act, perpetually in the wrong? In short, to make *my* sake *God's* sake, in the sense of Mr. Solmes's pitiful plea to me?

How often, my dear, have you and I endeavoured to detect and censure this partial spirit in others?

But I know you do not always content yourself with saying what you think may *justly* be said; but, in order to show the extent of a penetration which can go to the bottom of any subject, delight to say or to write all that *can* be *said* or *written,* or even *thought,* on the particular occasion; and this partly perhaps from being desirous [pardon me, my dear!] to be thought mistress of a sagacity that is aforehand with events. But who would wish to drain off or dry up a refreshing current, because it now and then puts us to some little inconvenience by its overflowings? In other words, who would not allow for the liveliness of a spirit which for one painful sensibility gives a hundred pleasurable ones; and the *one* in consequence of the *other?*

But now I come to the two points in your letter which most sensibly concern me: Thus you put them:

'Whether I choose not rather to go off [shocking words!]
'with one of my *own sex:* with my ANNA HOWE—
'than with one of the *other:* with Mr. LOVELACE?
And if *not,*
'Whether I should not marry him as soon as possible?'

You know, my dear, my reasons for rejecting your proposal, and even for being earnest that you should not be *known* to be assisting to me in an enterprise in which a cruel necessity induced *me* to think of engaging; and for which *you* have not the same plea. At this rate, *well* might your mother be uneasy at our correspondence, not

knowing to what inconveniences it might subject her an you!—If *I* am hardly excusable to think of withdrawin from my *unkind* friends, what could *you* have to say fc yourself, were you to abandon a mother so *indulgent* Does she suspect that your fervent friendship may lea you to a *small* indiscretion? and does this suspicion offen you? And would you, in resentment, show her and th world, that you can voluntarily rush into the *highest errc* that any of our sex can be guilty of?

And is it worthy of your generosity [I ask you, m dear, is it?] to think of taking so undutiful a step, becau you believe your mother would be glad to receive yo again?

I do assure you, that were I to take this step myself, would run all risks rather than you should accompany m in it. Have I, do you think, a desire to *double* and *trebl* my own fault in the eye of the world? in the eye of tha world which, cruelly as I am used (not knowing all would not acquit *me?*

But, my dearest, kindest friend, let me tell you that w will *neither* of us take such a step. The manner of puttin your questions abundantly convinces me that I ought no in *your* opinion, to *attempt* it. You no doubt *intend* tha I shall *so* take it; and I thank you for the equally polit and forcible conviction.

It is some satisfaction to me (taking the matter in th light) that I had begun to waver before I received your las And now I tell you that it has absolutely determined m not to go off; at least not to-morrow.

If *you,* my dear, think *the issue of the alternative* (to u your own words) *sits so lightly upon my mind,* in short, tha my *inclination* is *faulty;* the *world* would treat me muc less scrupulously. When therefore you represent *that a punctilio must be at an end the moment I am out of m father's house;* and *hint* that I must submit it to M Lovelace to judge *when* he can leave me with safety; tha is to say, give *him* the option whether he will leave me, c not; who can bear these reflections, who can resolve t

incur these inconveniences, that has the question still in her own power to decide upon?

While I thought only of an escape from *this house* as an escape from *Mr. Solmes;* that already my reputation suffered by my confinement; and that it would be still in my own option either to marry Mr. Lovelace, or wholly to renounce him; bold as the step was, I thought, treated as I am treated, something was to be said in excuse of it—if not to the world, to *myself:* and to be *self-acquitted,* is a blessing to be preferred to the option of all the world. But after I have censured most severely, as I have ever done, those giddy girls who have in the same hour, as I may say, that they have fled from their chamber, presented themselves at the altar that is to witness to their undutiful rashness; after I have stipulated with Mr. Lovelace *for time,* and for *an ultimate option whether to accept or refuse him;* and for his *leaving me, as soon as I am in a place of safety* (which, as you observe, *he* must be the judge of); and after he has *signified to me his compliance with these terms;* so that I cannot, if I *would,* recall them, and suddenly marry; you see, my dear, that I have nothing left me but to resolve *not* to go away with him!

But how, on this revocation of my appointment, shall I be able to pacify him?

How!—Why assert the privilege of my sex!—Surely, on *this* side of the solemnity he has no *right* to be displeased. Besides, did I not reserve a power of receding, as I saw fit? To what purpose, as I asked in the case between your mother and you, has anybody an option, if the making use of it shall give the refused a right to be disgusted?

Far, very far, would *those* who, according to the old law, have a *right* of *absolving* or *confirming* a child's promise, be from ratifying *mine,* had it been ever *so solemn* a one.*

* See *Numb.* xxx., where it is declared whose vows shall be binding, and whose not. The vows of a man, or of a widow, are there pronounced to be indispensable; because they are sole, and subject to no other domestic authority. But the vows of a single woman, and of a wife, if the father of

But this was rather an *appointment* than a promise: and suppose it had been the latter; and that I had *not* reserved to myself a liberty of revoking it; was it to preclude *better* or *maturer* consideration?—If so, how unfit to be given!—how ungenerous to be insisted upon?—And how unfitter still to be kept!—Is there a man living who ought to be angry that a woman whom he hopes one day to call his, shall refuse to keep a rash promise, when, on the maturest deliberation, she is convinced that it *was* a rash one?

I resolve then, upon the whole, to stand this one trial of Wednesday next—or perhaps I should rather say, of Tuesday evening, if my father hold his purpose of endeavouring, in person, to make me *read*, or *hear* read, and then *sign*, the settlements.—*That, that* must be the greatest trial of all.

If I am compelled to sign them over-night—then (the Lord bless me!) must all I dread follow, as of course, on Wednesday. If I can prevail upon them by my prayers [perhaps I shall fall into fits; for the very first appearance of my father, after having been so long banished his presence, will greatly affect me—if, I say, I can prevail upon them by my prayers] to lay aside their views; or to suspend

the one, or the husband of the other, disallow of them as soon as they know them, are to be of no force.

A matter highly necessary to be known; by all young ladies especially, whose designing addressers too often endeavour to engage them by vows; and then plead conscience and honour to them to hold them down to the performance.

It cannot be amiss to recite the very words.

Ver. 3. *If a woman vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth;*

4. *And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her; then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand.*

5. *But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand: and the Lord shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her.*

The same in the case of a wife, as said above. See ver. 6, 7, 8, &c.—And all is thus solemnly closed:

Ver. 16. *These are the statutes which the Lord commanded Moses between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, being yet in her youth in her father's house.*

the day, if but for one week; if *not*, but for two or three days; still Wednesday will be a lighter day of trial. They will surely give me time to *consider:* to *argue* with myself. This will not be *promising*. As I have made no effort to get away, they have no reason to suspect me; so I may have an opportunity, in the last resort, to withdraw. Mrs. Norton is to be with me: she, although she should be chidden for it, will, in my extremity, plead for me. My aunt Hervey *may*, in such an extremity, join with her. Perhaps my mother may be brought over. I will kneel to each, one by one, to make a friend. Some of them have been afraid to see me, lest they should be moved in my favour: does not this give me a reasonable hope that I *may* move them? My brother's counsel, heretofore given, to turn me out of doors to my evil destiny, may again be repeated, and may prevail; *then* shall I be in no *worse* case than *now* as to the displeasure of my friends; and thus far *better*, that it will not be my fault that I seek another protection: which even *then* ought to be my cousin Morden's, rather than Mr. Lovelace's, or any other person's.

My heart, in short, misgives me less when I resolve *this* way, than when I think of the *other:* and in so strong and involuntary a bias, the *heart* is, as I may say, *conscience*. And well cautions the wise man: 'Let the counsel 'of thine own heart stand; for there is no man more 'faithful to thee than it: for a man's mind is sometimes 'wont to tell him more than seven watchmen that sit 'above in a high tower.'*

Forgive these indigested self-reasonings. I will close here: and instantly set about a letter of revocation to Mr. Lovelace: take it as he will. It will only be another trial of temper to *him*. To *me* of infinite importance. And has he not promised temper and acquiescence, on the supposition of a change in my mind?

* *Ecclus.* xxxvii. 13, 14.

LETTER XIII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Sunday Morning, April 9.

NOBODY it seems will go to church this day. No blessing to be expected perhaps upon views so worldly, and in some so cruel.

They have a mistrust that I have some device in my head. Betty has been looking among my clothes. I found her, on coming up from depositing my letter to Lovelace (for I *have* written!) peering among them; for I had left the key in the lock. She coloured, and was confounded to be caught. But I only said I should be accustomed to any sort of treatment in time. If she had her orders—those were enough for her.

She owned, in her confusion, that a motion had been made to abridge me of my airings; and the report *she* should make, would be of no disadvantage to me. One of my friends, she told me, urged in my behalf, that there was no need of laying me under greater restraint, since Mr. Lovelace's threatening to *rescue* me by violence, were I to have been carried to my uncle's, was a conviction that I had no design to go to him voluntarily; and that if I *had*, I should have made preparations of that kind *before now*; and, most probably, been detected in them.—*Hence*, it was also inferred that there was no room to doubt but I would at last comply. And, added the bold creature, if you don't intend to do so, your conduct, Miss, seems strange to me.—Only thus she reconciled it, that I had gone so far I knew not how to come off *genteelly*: and she fancied I should, in *full congregation*, on Wednesday, give Mr. Solmes my hand. And then said the confident wench, as the learned Dr. Brand took his text last Sunday, *There will be joy in heaven.*

This is the substance of my letter to Mr. Lovelace:

'That I have reasons of the greatest consequence to

'*myself* (and which, when known, must satisfy *him*) to 'suspend, for the present, my intention of leaving my 'father's house: that I have hopes that matters may be 'brought to a happy conclusion, without taking a step 'which nothing but the last necessity could justify: and 'that he may depend upon my promise, that I will die 'rather than consent to marry Mr. Solmes.'

And so I am preparing myself to stand the shock of his exclamatory reply. But be that what it will, it cannot affect me so much as the apprehensions of what may happen to me next Tuesday or Wednesday; for now those apprehensions engage my whole attention, and make me sick at the very heart.

—o—

Sunday, four in the afternoon.

My letter is not yet taken away—If he should not send for it, or take it, and come hither on my not meeting him to-morrow, in doubt of what may have befallen me, what shall I do! Why had I any concerns with this sex!—I, that was so happy till I knew this man!

I dined in the ivy summer-house. My request to do so was complied with at the first word. To show I meant nothing, I went again into the house with Betty, as soon as I had dined. I thought it was not amiss to ask this liberty; the weather seemed to be set in fine. Who knows what Tuesday or Wednesday may produce?

—o—

Sunday Evening, seven o'clock.

THERE remains my letter still!—He is busied, I suppose, in his preparations for to-morrow. But then he has servants. Does the man think he is so *secure* of me, that having appointed, he need not give himself any further concern about me till the very moment? He knows how I am beset. He knows not what may happen. I *might* be ill, or still more closely watched or confined than before. The correspondence *might* be discovered. It *might* be necessary

to vary the scheme. I *might* be forced into measures which might entirely frustrate my purpose. I *might* have new doubts. I *might* suggest something more convenient, for anything he knew. What can the man mean, I wonder!—Yet it shall lie: for if he has it any time before the appointed hour, it will save me declaring to him personally my changed purpose, and the trouble of contending with him on that score. If he send for it at all, he will see by the date that he might have had it in time; and if he be put to any inconvenience from shortness of notice, let him take it for his pains.

—o—

Sunday Night, nine o'clock.

It is determined, it seems, to send for Mrs. Norton to be here on Tuesday to dinner; and she is to stay with me for a whole week.

So she is first to endeavour to persuade me to comply; and when the violence is done, she is to comfort me, and try to reconcile me to my fate. They expect *fits* and *fetches,* Betty insolently tells me, and expostulations, and exclamations *without number:* but everybody will be prepared for them: and when it's over, it's over; and I shall be easy and pacified when I find I can't help it.

—o—

Monday Morning, April 10, *seven o'clock.*

Oh, my dear! there yet lies the letter, just as I left it!

Does he think he is so sure of me?—Perhaps he imagines that I *dare not* alter my purpose. I wish I had never known him! I begin now to see this rashness in the light every one else would have seen it in, had I been guilty of it. But what can I do, if he come to-day at the appointed time! If he receive not the letter, I must see him, or he will think something has befallen me; and certainly will come to the house. As certainly he will be insulted. And what, in that case, may be the consequence! Then I as

good as promised that I would take the first opportunity to see him, if I changed my mind, and to give him my reasons for it. I have no doubt but he will be out of humour upon it: but better, if we meet, that *he* go away dissatisfied with *me*, than that *I* should go away dissatisfied with *myself*.

Yet, short as the time is, he may still perhaps send, and get the letter. Something may have happened to prevent him, which when known will excuse him.

After I have disappointed him more than once before, on a requested *interview* only, it is impossible he should not have *curiosity* at least, to know if something has not happened; and whether my mind hold or not in this more *important case*. And yet, as I rashly confirmed my resolution by a second letter, I begin now to doubt it.

—o—

Nine o'clock.

My cousin Dolly Hervey slid the enclosed letter into my hand, as I passed by her, coming out of the garden.

Dearest Madam,—I have got intelligence from one who pretends to know everything, that you must be married on Wednesday morning to Mr. Solmes. Perhaps, however, she says this only to vex me; for it is that saucy creature Betty Barnes. A license is got, as she says: and so far she went as to tell me (bidding me say nothing, but she knew I would) that Mr. Brand is to marry you. For Dr. Lewen, I hear, refuses, unless your consent can be obtained; and they have heard that he does not approve of their proceedings against you. Mr. Brand, I am told, is to have his fortune made by uncle Harlowe and among them.

You will know better than I what to make of all these matters; for sometimes I think Betty tells me things as if I should not tell you, and yet expects that I will.* For

* It is easy for such of the readers as have been attentive to Mr. Lovelace's manner of working, to suppose, from this hint of Miss Hervey's, that he had instructed his double-faced agent to put his sweetheart Betty upon alarming Miss Hervey, in hopes she would alarm her beloved cousin (as we see she does), in order to keep her steady to her appointment with him.

there is great whispering between Miss Harlowe and her; and I have observed that when their whispering is over, Betty comes and tells me something by way of secret. She and all the world know how much I love you: and so I would *have* them. It is an honour to me to love a young lady who is and ever was an honour to all her family, let them say what they will.

But from a more certain authority than Betty's I can assure you (but I must beg of you to burn this letter) that you are to be searched once more for letters, and for pen and ink; for they know you write. Something they pretend to have come at from one of Mr. Lovelace's servants, which they hope to make something of. I know not for certain what it is. He must be a very vile and wicked man who would boast of a lady's favour to him, and reveal secrets. But Mr. Lovelace, I daresay, is too much of a gentleman to be guilty of such ingratitude.

Then they have a notion, from that false Betty, I believe, that you intend to take something to make yourself sick; and so they will search for phials and powders, and such like.

If nothing shall be found that will increase their suspicions, you are to be used more kindly by your papa when you appear before them all, than he of late has used you.

Yet, sick or well, alas! my dear cousin! you must be married. But your husband is to go home every night without you, till you are reconciled to him. And so illness can be no pretence to save you.

They are sure you will make a good wife. So would not I, unless I liked my husband. And Mr. Solmes is always telling them how he will purchase your love by rich presents. —A sycophant man!—I wish he and Betty Barnes were to come together; and he would beat her every day.

After what I told you, I need not advise you to secure everything you would not have seen.

Once more let me beg that you will burn this letter: and pray, dearest Madam, do not take anything that may prejudice your health: for that will not do. I am

Your truly loving cousin,

D. H.

WHEN I first read my cousin's letter, I was half inclined to resume my former intention; especially as my countermanding letter was not taken away; and as my heart ached at the thoughts of the conflict I must expect to have with him on my refusal. For see him for a few moments I doubt I must, lest he should take some rash resolutions; especially as he has reason to expect I will see him. But here your words, *that all punctilio is at an end the moment I am out of my father's house,* added to the still more cogent considerations of duty and reputation, determined me once more against taking the rash step. And it will be very hard (although no seasonable fainting, or wished-for fit, should stand my friend) if I cannot gain one month, or fortnight, or week. And I have still more hopes that I shall prevail for some delay, from my cousin's intimation that the good Dr. Lewen refuses to give his assistance to their projects, if they have not my consent, and thinks me cruelly used; since without taking notice that I am apprised of this, I can plead a scruple of conscience, and insist upon having that worthy divine's opinion upon it: in which, enforced as I shall enforce it, my mother will surely second me: my aunt Hervey and Mrs. Norton will support *her:* the suspension must follow: and I can but get away afterwards.

But if they *will* compel me: if they *will* give me no time: if nobody *will* be moved: if it be resolved that the ceremony shall be read over my constrained hand—why then—Alas! What then!—I can but—But what? Oh, my dear! this Solmes shall never have my vows I am resolved! and I will say nothing but no, as long as I shall be able to speak. And who will presume to look upon such an act of violence as a marriage?—It is impossible, surely, that a father and mother can see such a dreadful compulsion offered to their child—but if mine should withdraw, and leave the task to my brother and sister, they will have no mercy.

I am grieved to be driven to have recourse to the following artifices.

I have given them a clue, by the feather of a pen sticking

out, where they will find such of my hidden stores, as I intend they shall find.

Two or three little essays I have left easy to be seen, o my own writing.

About a dozen lines also of a letter begun to you, i which I express my hopes (although I say that appearance are against me), and that my friends will relent. The know from your mother, by my uncle Antony, that, some how or other, I now and then get a letter to you. In thi piece of a letter I declare renewedly my firm resolution t give up the man so obnoxious to my family, on their releas ing me from the address of the other.

Near the essays, I have left the copy of my letter to Lad Drayton;* which affording arguments suitable to my cas may chance (thus accidentally to be fallen upon) to inclin them to favour me.

I have reserves of pens and ink, you may believe; an one or two in the ivy summer-house; with which I shal amuse myself, in order to lighten, if possible, those appre hensions which more and more affect me, as Wednesday the day of trial, approaches.

—o—

LETTER XIV.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Ivy Summer-house, eleven o'clock.

He has not yet got my letter: and while I was contrivin here how to send my officious gaoleress from me, that might have time for the intended interview, and had hi upon an expedient which I believe would have done, cam my aunt and furnished me with a much better. She sav my little table covered, preparative to my solitary dinner and hoped, she told me, that this would be the last day tha my friends would be deprived of my company at table.

* See letters LVII. and LVIII. of vol. I.

You may believe, my dear, that the thoughts of meeting Mr. Lovelace, for fear of being discovered, together with the contents of my cousin Dolly's letter, gave me great and visible emotions. She took notice of them—Why these sighs, why these heavings here? said she, patting my neck —Oh, my dear niece, who would have thought so much natural sweetness could be so very unpersuadable?

I could not answer her, and she proceeded—I am come, I doubt, upon a very unwelcome errand. Some things that have been told us yesterday, which came from the mouth of one of the most desperate and insolent men in the world, convince your father, and all of us, that you still find means to write out of the house. Mr. Lovelace knows everything that is done here; and that as soon as done; and great mischief is apprehended from him, which you are as much concerned as anybody to prevent. Your mother has also some apprehensions concerning yourself, which yet she hopes are groundless; but, however, cannot be easy, nor will be permitted to be easy, if she would, unless (while you remain here in the garden, or in this summer-house) you give her the opportunity once more of looking into your closet, your cabinet, and drawers. It will be the better taken, if you give me cheerfully your keys. I hope, my dear, you won't dispute it. Your desire of dining in this place was the more readily complied with for the sake of such an opportunity.

I thought myself very lucky to be so well prepared by my cousin Dolly's means for this search: but yet I artfully made some scruples, and not a few complaints of this treatment: after which I not only gave her the keys of all but even officiously emptied my pockets before her, and invited her to put her fingers in my stays, that she might be sure I had no papers there.

This highly obliged her; and she said she would represent my cheerful compliance as it deserved, *let my brother and sister say what they would.* My mother in particular, she was sure, would rejoice at the opportunity given her to obviate, as she doubted not would be the case, some suspicions that were raised against me.

She then hinted that there were methods taken to come at all Mr. Lovelace's secrets, and even, from his careless communicativeness, at some of *mine*; it being, she said, his custom boastingly to prate to his very servants of his intentions in particular cases. She added, that deep as he was thought to be, my brother was as deep as he, and fairly too hard for him at his own weapons—as one day it would be found.

I knew not, I said, the meaning of these dark hints. I thought the cunning she hinted at, on *both* sides, called rather for contempt than applause. I myself might have been put upon artifices which my heart disdained to practise, had I given way to the *resentment* which, I was bold to say, was much more justifiable than the actions that occasioned it: that it was evident to me, from what she had said, that their present suspicions of me were partly owing to this supposed superior cunning of my brother, and partly to the consciousness that the usage I met with might naturally produce a reason for such suspicions: that it was very unhappy for me to be made the butt of my brother's wit: that it would have been more to his praise to have aimed at showing a kind heart than a cunning head: that, nevertheless, I wished he knew *himself* as well as I imagined *I* knew him; and he would then have less conceit of his abilities: which abilities would, in my opinion, be less thought of, if his power to do ill offices were not much greater than they.

I was vexed. I could not help making this reflection. The dupe the other too probably makes of him, through his own spy, deserved it. But I so little approve of this low art in either, that were I but tolerably used, the vileness of that man, that Joseph Leman, should be inquired into.

She was sorry, she said, to find that I thought so disparagingly of my brother. He was a young man both of learning and parts.

Learning enough, I said, to make him vain of it among us women: but not of *parts* sufficient to make his learning valuable either to himself or to anybody else.

She wished, indeed, that he had more good nature: but she feared that I had too great an opinion of somebody else,

to think so well of my brother as a sister ought: since, between the two, there was a sort of rivalry, as to abilities, that made them hate one another.

Rivalry! Madam, said I.—If that be the case, or whether it be or not, I wish they both understood, better than either of them seems to do, what it becomes gentlemen, and men of liberal education, to be and to do.—Neither of them then would glory in what they ought to be ashamed of.

But waiving this subject, it was not impossible, I said, that they might find a little of my writing, and a pen or two and a little ink [hated art!—or rather, hateful the necessity for it!], as I was not permitted to go up to put them out of the way: but if they did, I must be contented. And I assured her that, take what time they pleased, I would not go in to disturb them, but would be either in or near the garden, in this summer-house, or in the cedar one, or about my poultry-yard, or near the great cascade, till I was ordered to return to my prison. With like cunning I said, that I supposed the unkind search would not be made till the servants had dined; because I doubted not that the pert Betty Barnes, who knew all the corners of my apartment and closet, would be employed in it.

She hoped, she said, that nothing could be found that would give a handle against me; for she would assure me the motives to the search, on my mother's part especially, were, that she hoped to find reason rather to acquit than to blame me; and that my father might be induced to see me to-morrow night, or Wednesday morning, with temper: with *tenderness,* I should rather say, said she; for he is resolved so to do, if no new offence be given.

Ah! Madam, said I——

Why that Ah! Madam, and shaking your head so significantly?

I wish, Madam, that I may not have more reason to dread my father's continued displeasure, than to hope for his returning tenderness.

You don't *know,* my dear!—Things may take a turn—things may not be so bad as you fear——

Dearest Madam, have you any consolation to give me?-
Why, my dear, it is possible that *you* may be more con
pliable than you have been.

Why raised you my hopes, Madam?—Don't let me thir
my dear aunt Hervey cruel to a niece who truly honou
her.

I may tell you more perhaps, said she (but in confidenc
in absolute confidence), if the inquiry within came out
your favour. Do you know of anything above that can
found to your disadvantage?

Some papers they will find, I doubt: but I must tal
consequences. My brother and sister will be at hand wi
their good-natured constructions. I am made desperat
and care not what is found.

I hope, I *earnestly* hope, said she, that nothing can
found that will impeach your discretion; and then—but
may say too much—

And away she went, having added to my perplexity.

But I now can think of nothing but this interview.-
Would to Heaven it were over!—To meet to quarrel—b
let him take what measures he will, I will not stay a *mome*
with him, if he be not quite calm and resigned.

Don't you see how crooked some of my lines are? Don
you see how some of the letters stagger more than other
—That is when this interview is more in my head than m
subject.

But after all, should I, *ought* I to meet him? How ha
I taken it for granted that I should!—I wish there we
time to take your advice. Yet you are so loth to spea
quite out—but *that* I owe, as you own, to the difficulty
my situation.

I should have mentioned that in the course of this co
versation I besought my aunt to stand my friend, and
put in a word for me on my approaching trial; and to e
deavour to procure me *time for consideration,* if I cou
obtain nothing else.

She told me that after the ceremony was perform
[*odious confirmation of a hint in my cousin Dolly's letter!*

I should have what time I pleased to reconcile myself to my lot before cohabition.

This put me out of all patience.

She requested of me in *her* turn, she said, that I would resolve to meet them all with cheerful duty, and with a spirit of absolute acquiescence. It was in my power to make them all happy. And how joyful would it be to her, she said, to see my father, my mother, my uncles, my brother, my sister, all embracing me with raptures, and folding me in turns to their fond hearts, and congratulating each other on their restored happiness! Her own joy, she said, would probably make her motionless and speechless for a time: and for her Dolly—the poor girl, who had suffered in the esteem of some for her *grateful* attachment to me, would have everybody love her again.

Will you doubt, my dear, that my next trial will be the most affecting that I have yet had?

My aunt set forth all this in so strong a light, and I was so particularly touched on my cousin Dolly's account, that, impatient as I was just before, I was greatly moved: yet could only show, by my sighs and my tears, how desirable such an event would be to me, could it be brought about upon conditions with which it was possible for me to comply.

Here comes Betty Barnes with my dinner— ⋮

The wench is gone. The time of meeting is at hand. Oh, that he may not come!—But should I, or should I not, meet him?—How I question, without possibility of a timely answer!

Betty, according to my leading hint to my aunt, boasted to me that she was to be *employed*, as she called it, after she had ate her own dinner.

She should be sorry, she told me, to have me found out. Yet 'twould be all for my good. I should have it in my power to be forgiven for all at once, before Wednesday night. The confident creature then, to stifle a laugh, put a corner of her apron in her mouth, and went to the door: and on

her return to take away, as I angrily bid her, she begged my excuse—but—but—and then the saucy creature laughed again, she could not help it, to think how I had drawn myself in by my summer-house dinnering, since it had given so fine an opportunity, by way of surprise, to look into all my private hoards. She thought *something was in the wind*, when my brother came into my dining here so readily. Her young master was too hard for everybody. 'Squire Lovelace himself was nothing at all at a quick thought to her young master.

My aunt mentioned Mr. Lovelace's boasting behaviour to *his* servants: perhaps *he* may be so mean. But as to my brother, he always took a pride in making himself appear to be a man of parts and learning to *our* servants. *Pride* and *meanness*, I have often thought, are as nearly allied, and as close borderers upon each other, as the poet tells us *wit* and *madness* are.

But why do I trouble you (and myself, at such a crisis) with these impertinences?—Yet I would forget, if I could, the nearest evil, the interview; because my apprehensions increasing as the hour is at hand, I should, were my intention to be engrossed by them, be unfit to see him, if he does come; and then he will have too much advantage over me, as he will have seeming reason to reproach me with change of resolution.

The *upbraider*, you know, my dear, is in some sense a superior; while the *upbraided*, if with reason upbraided, must make a figure as spiritless as conscious.

I know that this wretch will, if he *can*, be his own judge, and *mine* too. But the latter he shall not be.

I daresay we shall be all to pieces. But I don't care for that. It would be hard if I, who have held it out so sturdily to my father and uncles, should not—but he is at the garden-door—

I WAS mistaken!—How many noises *unlike*, be made *like* to what one fears!—Why flutters the fool so!

I WILL hasten to deposit this. Then I will, for the last

time, go to the usual place in hopes to find that he has got my letter. If he *has*, I will not meet him. If he has *not*, I will take it back, and show him what I have written. That will break the ice, as I may say, and save me much circumlocution and reasoning: and a steady adherence to that my written mind is all that will be necessary.—The interview must be as short as possible; for should it be discovered, it would furnish a new and strong pretence for the intended evil of Wednesday next.

Perhaps I shall not be able to write again one while. Perhaps not till I am the miserable property of that Solmes! —But that shall never, never be, while I have my senses.

If your servant find nothing from me by Wednesday morning, you may then conclude that I can neither write to you, nor receive your favours.

In that case, pity and pray for me, my beloved friend; and continue to me that place in your affection, which is the pride of my life, and the only comfort left to

Your

CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER XV.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

St. Alban's, Tuesday Morning, past one.

O MY DEAREST FRIEND!—After what I had resolved upon, as by my former, what shall I write? what *can* I? with what consciousness, even by *letter*, do I approach you? —You will soon hear (if already you have not heard from the mouth of common fame) that your Clarissa Harlowe is gone off with a man!

I am busying myself to give you the particulars at large. The whole twenty-four hours of each day (to begin the moment I can fix) shall be employed in it till it is finished: every one of the hours, I mean, that will be spared me by this interrupting man, to whom I have made myself so

foolishly accountable for too many of them. Rest is departed from me. I have no call for that: and that has no balm for the wounds of my mind. So you'll have all those hours without interruption till the account is ended.

But will you receive, shall you be *permitted* to receive my letters, after what I have done?

Oh, my dearest friend!—But I must make the best of it.

I hope that will not be very bad! yet am I convinced that I did a rash and inexcusable thing in meeting him; and all his tenderness, all his vows, cannot pacify my inward reproaches on that account.

The bearer comes to you, my dear, for the little parcel of linen which I sent you with far better and more agreeable hopes.

Send not my letters. Send the linen only: except you will favour me with one line, to tell me you love me still; and that you will suspend your censures till you have the whole before you. I am the readier to send thus early, because if you have deposited anything for me, you may cause it to be taken back, or withhold anything you had but intended to send.

Adieu, my dearest friend!—I beseech you to love me still. —But alas! what will your mother say?—what will mine? —what my other relations?—and what my dear Mrs. Norton? —and how will my brother and sister triumph!

I cannot at present tell you how, or where you can direct to me. For very early shall I leave this place; harassed and fatigued to death. But when I can do nothing else, constant use has made me able to write. Long, very long, has that been all my amusement and pleasure: yet could not *that* have been such to me, had I not had *you*, my best beloved friend, to write to. Once more adieu. Pity and pray for

Your

CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER XVI.

Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

Tuesday, nine o'clock.

I WRITE, because you enjoin me to do so. Love you still! How can I help it, if I would? You may believe how I stand aghast, your letter communicating the first news—Good God of Heaven and Earth!—But what shall I say?—I am all impatient for particulars.

Lord have mercy upon me!—But can it be?

My mother will *indeed* be astonished!—How can I tell it her!—It was but last night (upon some jealousies put into her head by your foolish uncle) that I assured her, and this upon the strength of your *own* assurances, that neither man nor devil would be able to induce you to take a step that was in the least derogatory to the most punctilious honour.

But, once more, can it be? What woman at this rate!—But, God preserve you!

Let nothing escape you in your letters. Direct them for me, however, to Mrs. Knollys's, till further notice.

OBSERVE, my dear, that I don't blame *you* by all this.—Your relations only are in fault!—Yet how you came to change your mind is the surprising thing.

How to break it to my mother, I know not. Yet if she hear it first from any other, and find I knew it before, she will believe it to be by my connivance!—Yet, as I hope to live, I know not how to break it to her.

But this is teasing you.—I am sure, without intention.

Let me now repeat my former advice—if you are *not* married by this time, be sure delay not the ceremony. Since things are as they are, I wish it were thought that you were privately married before you went away. If these men plead AUTHORITY to our pain, when we are *theirs*—why should we not, in such a case as *this*, make some good out of the hated word, for our reputation, when we are induced to violate a more natural one?

Your brother and sister [that vexes me almost as much as anything!] have now their ends. Now, I suppose, will go forward alterations of wills, and such-like spiteful doings.

Miss Lloyd and Miss Biddulph this moment send up their names. They are out of breath, Kitty says, to speak to me —easy to guess their errand;—I must see my mother before I see them. I have no way but to show her your letter to clear myself. I shall not be able to say a word till she has run herself out of her first breath.—Forgive me, my dear—surprise makes me write thus. If your messenger did not wait, and were not those young ladies below, I would write it over again, for fear of afflicting you.

I send what you write for. If there be anything else you want that is in my power, command without reserve

Your ever affectionate

Anna Howe.

—o—

LETTER XVII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Tuesday Night.

I think myself obliged to thank you, my dear Miss Howe, for your condescension in taking notice of a creature who has occasioned you so much scandal.

I am grieved on this account, as much, I verily think, as for the evil itself.

Tell me—but yet I am afraid to know—what your mother said.

I long, and yet I dread, to be told what the young ladies my companions, now never more perhaps to be so, say of me.

They cannot, however, say worse of me than I will of myself. Self-accusation shall flow in every line of my narrative where I think I am justly censurable. If anything can arise from the account I am going to give you, for extenuation of my fault (for that is all a person can hope for, who

cannot excuse herself), I know I may expect it from your friendship, though not from the charity of any other: since by this time I doubt not every mouth is opened against me; and all that know Clarissa Harlowe condemn the fugitive daughter.

After I had deposited my letter to you, written down to the last hour, as I may say, I returned to the ivy summer-house; first taking back my letter from the loose bricks: and there I endeavoured, as coolly as my situation would permit, to recollect and lay together several incidents that had passed between my aunt and me; and comparing them with some of the contents of my cousin Dolly's letter, I began to hope that I needed not to be so very apprehensive as I have been of next Wednesday. And thus I argued with myself.

'Wednesday cannot possibly be the day they intend, 'although to intimidate me they may wish me to think it 'is: for the settlements are unsigned: nor have they been 'offered me to sign. I can choose whether I will or will 'not put my hand to them; hard as it will be to refuse if 'my father tender them to me—besides, did not my father 'and mother propose, if I made compulsion necessary, to 'go to my uncle's themselves in order to be out of the way 'of my appeals? Whereas they intend to be present on 'Wednesday. And however affecting to me the thought 'of meeting them and all my friends in full assembly is, 'perhaps it is the very thing I ought to wish for: since my 'brother and sister had such an opinion of my interest in 'them, that they got me excluded from their presence, as 'a measure which they thought previously necessary to 'carry on their designs.

'Nor have I reason to doubt but that (as I had before 'argued with myself) I shall be able to bring over some of 'my relations to my party; and being brought face to 'face with my brother, that I shall expose his malevolence, 'and of consequence weaken his power.

'Then supposing the very worst, challenging the minister

'as I shall challenge him, he will not presume to proceed: 'nor surely will Mr. Solmes dare to accept my refusing and 'struggling hand. And finally, if nothing else will do, nor 'procure me delay, I can plead scruples of conscience, and 'even pretend prior obligation; for, my dear, I have given 'Mr. Lovelace room to hope (as you will see in one of my 'letters in your hands) that I will be no other man's while 'he is single, and gives me not wilful and premeditated 'cause of offence against him; and this in order to rein in 'his resentment on the declared animosity of my brother 'and uncles to him. And as I shall appeal, or refer my 'scruples on this head, to the good Dr. Lewen, it is impos-'sible but that my mother and aunt (if nobody else) must 'be affected with this plea.'

Revolving cursorily these things, I congratulated myself that I had resolved against going away with Mr. Lovelace.

I told you, my dear, that I would not spare myself: and I enumerate these particulars as so many arguments to condemn the actions I have been so unhappily betrayed into. An argument that concludes against me with the greater force, as I must acknowledge that I was apprehensive that what my cousin Dolly mentions as from Betty, and from my sister who told *her*, that she should tell *me*, in order to make me desperate, and perhaps *to push me upon some such step as I have been driven to take, as the most effectual means to ruin me with my father and uncles.*

God forgive me, if I judge too hardly of their views!—But if I do *not*, it follows that they laid a wicked snare for me; and that I have been caught in it.—And now may they triumph, if they *can* triumph, in the ruin of a sister who never wished or intended to hurt them!

As the above kind of reasoning had lessened my apprehensions as to the Wednesday, it added to those I had of meeting Mr. Lovelace—now, as it seemed, not only the nearest, but the heaviest evil; principally indeed because *nearest;* for little did I dream (foolish creature that I was, and every way beset!) of the event proving what it has proved. I expected a contention with him, 'tis true, as he

had not my letter: but I thought it would be very strange, as I mentioned in one of my former,* if I, who had so steadily held out against characters so venerable, against authorities so sacred, as I may say, when I thought them unreasonably exerted, should not find myself more equal to such a trial as this; especially as I had so much reason to be displeased with him for not having taken away my letter.

On what a point of time may one's worldly happiness depend! Had I had but two hours more to consider of the matter, and to attend to and improve upon these new lights as I may call them—but even then, perhaps, I might have given him a meeting.—Fool that I was! what had I to do to give him hope that I would *personally* acquaint him with the reason for my change of mind, if I did change it?

Oh, my dear! an obliging temper is a very dangerous temper!—By endeavouring to gratify others, it is evermore disobliging itself!

When the bell rang to call the servants to dinner, Betty came to me and asked if I had any commands before she went to hers; repeating her hint that she should be *employed;* adding, that she believed it was expected that I should not come up till she came down, or till I saw my aunt or Miss Hervey.

I asked her some questions about the cascade, which had been out of order, and lately mended; and expressed a curiosity to see how it played, in order to induce her [how cunning to cheat myself, as it proved!] to go thither, if she found me not where she left me; it being at a part of the garden most distant from the ivy summer-house.

She could have hardly got into the house when I heard the first signal—Oh, how my heart fluttered!—but no time was to be lost. I stept to the garden-door; and seeing a clear coast, unbolted the already-unlocked door—and there was he, all impatience, waiting for me.

A panic next to fainting seized me when I saw him. My heart seemed convulsed; and I trembled so, that I should hardly have kept my feet, had he not supported me.

* See Letter XIII.

Fear nothing, dearest creature, said he—let us hasten away—the chariot is at hand—and by this sweet condescension, you have obliged me beyond expression or return.

Recovering my spirits a little, as he kept drawing me after him, O Mr. Lovelace, said I, I cannot go with you—*indeed* I cannot—I wrote you word so—let go my hand, and you shall see my letter. It has lain there from yesterday morning, till within this half hour. I bid you watch to the last for a letter from me, lest I should be obliged to revoke the appointment; and had you followed the direction, you would have found it.

I have been watched, my dearest life, said he, half out of breath—I have been watched in every step I took: and my trusty servant has been watched too ever since Saturday; and dared not to come near your wall. And here we shall be discovered in a moment.—Speed away, my charmer—this is the moment of your deliverance—if you neglect this opportunity, you *never* can have such another.

What is it you mean, sir?—Let go my hand: for I tell you [struggling vehemently] that I will sooner die than go with you.

Good God! said he, with a look of wildness and surprise, what is it I hear!—But [still drawing me after him, as he retreated farther from the door] it is no time to argue—by all that's good you must go—surely you cannot doubt my honour, nor give me cause to question your own.

As you value me, Mr. Lovelace, urge me no further. I come fixed and resolved. Let me give you the letter I had written. My further reasons shall follow; and they will convince you that I ought not to go.

Nothing, madam, can convince me—by all that's sacred, I will not leave you. To leave you now would be to lose you for ever——

Am I to be thus compelled? interrupted I, with equal indignation and vehemence.—Let go my hands—I am resolved not to go with you—and I will convince you that I *ought* not.

All my friends expect you, Madam—all your own are

determined against you—Wednesday next is the day, the important, perhaps the fatal day! Would you stay to be Solmes's wife?—Can this be your determination at last?

No, never, never will I be that man's—But I will not go with you! [draw me not thus—How dare you, sir? I would not have seen you, but to tell you so]. I had not met you, but for fear you would have been guilty of some rashness—and, once more, I will *not* go.—What mean you? —striving with all my force to get from him.

What can have possessed my angel, said he [quitting my hands, and with a gentler voice], that after so much ill-usage from your relations; vows so solemn on my part; an affection so ardent; you stab me with a refusal to stand by your own appointment?

We have no time to talk, Mr. Lovelace. I will give you my reasons at a better opportunity. I cannot go with you now—and once more urge me no further—surely, I am not to be compelled by everybody!

I see how it is, said he, with a dejected but passionate air—what a severe fate is mine!—At length your spirit is subdued!—Your brother and sister have prevailed; and I must give up all my hopes to a wretch so *truly* despicable——

Once more I tell you, interrupted I, I never will be his —all may end on Wednesday differently from what you expect——

And it may *not!*—And then, good heavens!

It is to be their last effort, as I have reason to believe——

And I have reason to believe so too—since if you stay, you will inevitably be Solmes's wife.

Not so, interrupted I—I have obliged them in one point. They will be in good humour with me. I shall gain time at least. I am sure I shall. I have several ways to gain time.

And what, Madam, will gaining time do? It is plain you have not a hope beyond that—it is plain you have not, by putting all upon that precarious issue. Oh, my dearest, dearest life, let me beseech you not to run a risk of this consequence. I can convince you that it will be *more* than

a risk if you go back, that you will on Wednesday next be Solmes's wife.—Prevent, therefore, now that it is in your power to prevent, the fatal mischiefs that will follow such a dreadful certainty.

While I have any room for hope, it concerns *your* honour, Mr. Lovelace, as well as mine (if you have the value for me you pretend, and wish me to believe you), that my conduct in this great point should justify my prudence.

Your prudence, Madam! When has that been questionable? Yet what stead has either your prudence or your duty stood you in, with people so strangely determined?

And then he pathetically enumerated the different instances of the harsh treatment I had met with; imputing all to the malice and caprice of a brother who set everybody against him: and insisting that I had no other way to bring about a reconciliation with my father and uncles, than by putting myself out of the power of my brother's inveterate malice.

Your brother's whole reliance, proceeded he, has been upon your easiness to bear his insults. Your whole family will seek to *you*, when you have freed yourself from this disgraceful oppression. When they know you are with those who *can* and *will* right you, they will give up to you your own estate. Why then, putting his arms around me, and again drawing me with a gentle force after him, do you hesitate a moment?—Now is the time—Fly with me, then, I beseech you, my dearest creature! Trust your persecuted adorer. Have we not suffered in the same cause? If any imputations are cast upon you, give me the honour (*as I shall be found to deserve it*) to call you mine; and when you are so, shall I not be able to protect both your person and character?

Urge me no more, Mr. Lovelace, I conjure you. You yourself have given me a hint which I will speak plainer to than prudence, perhaps, on any other occasion would allow. I am convinced that Wednesday next (if I had time I would give you my reasons) is not intended to be the day we had both so much dreaded: and if after that day shall

be over, I find my friends determined in Mr. Solmes's favour, I will then contrive some way to meet you with Miss Howe, who is not your enemy: and when the solemnity has passed, I shall think that step a duty, which *till* then will be criminal to take: since now my father's authority is unimpeached by any greater.

Dearest Madam——

Nay, Mr. Lovelace, if you now dispute—if, after this more favourable declaration than I had the thought of making, you are not satisfied, I shall know what to think both of your gratitude and generosity.

The case, Madam, admits not of this alternative. I am all gratitude upon it. I cannot express how much I should be delighted with the charming hope you have given me, were you not next Wednesday, if you stay, to be another man's. Think, dearest creature! what a heightening of my anguish the distant hope you bid me look up to is, taken in this light!

Depend, depend upon it, I will die sooner than be Mr. Solmes's. If you would have me rely upon *your* honour, why should you doubt of *mine?*

I doubt not your *honour*, Madam; your *power* is all I doubt. You never, never can have such another opportunity.—Dearest creature, permit me—and he was again drawing me after him.

Whither, sir, do you draw me?—Leave me this moment.—Do you seek to keep me till my return shall grow dangerous or impracticable? This moment let me go, if you would have me think tolerably of you.

My happiness, Madam, both here and hereafter, and the safety of all your implacable family, depend upon this moment.

To Providence, Mr. Lovelace, and to the law, will I leave the safety of my friends. You shall not threaten me into a rashness that my heart condemns!—Shall I, to promote your happiness, as you call it, destroy all my future peace of mind?

You trifle with me, my dear life, just as our better prospects begin to open. The way is clear; just now it is clear;

but you may be prevented in a moment. What is it you doubt?—May I perish eternally, if your will shall not be a law to me in everything! All my relations expect you. Your own appointment calls upon you.—Next Wednesday! —Dearest creature! think of next Wednesday!—And to what is it I urge you, but to take a step that sooner than any other will reconcile you to all whom you have most reason to value in your family?

Let me judge for myself, sir. Do not you, who blame my friends for endeavouring to compel me, *yourself* seek to compel me. I won't bear it. Your earnestness gives me greater apprehensions and greater reluctance. Let me go back, then—let me, before it is too late, go back, that it may not be worse for both—what mean you by this forcible treatment? Is it thus that I am to judge of the entire submission to my will which you have so often vowed?—Unhand me this moment, or I will cry out for help.

I will obey you, my dearest creature!—And quitted my hand with a look full of tender despondency, that knowing the violence of his temper, half concerned me for him. Yet I was hastening from him, when, with a solemn air, looking upon his sword, but catching, as it were, his hand from it, he folded both his arms as if a sudden thought had recovered him from an intended rashness.

Stay, one moment—but one moment stay, oh, best beloved of my soul!—Your retreat is secure, if you *will* go: the key lies down at the door.—But, O Madam, next *Wednesday*, and you are Mr. Solmes's!—Fly me not so eagerly—hear me but a few words.

When near the garden door, I stopped; and was the more satisfied, as I saw the key there by which I could let myself in again at pleasure. But being uneasy lest I should be missed, I told him I could stay no longer. I had already stayed too long. I would write to him all my reasons. And depend upon it, Mr. Lovelace, said I [just upon the point of stooping for the key, in order to return], I will die rather than have that man. You know what I have promised, if I find myself in danger.

One word, Madam, however; one word more [approaching me, his arms still folded, as if, as I thought, he would not be tempted to mischief]. Remember only that I come at your appointment, to redeem you, at the hazard of my life, from your gaolers and persecutors, with a resolution, God is my witness, or may He for ever blast me! [that was his shocking imprecation] to be a father, uncle, brother, and, as I humbly hoped, in your own good time, a *husband* to you, all in one. But since I find you are so ready to cry out for help against me, which must bring down upon me the vengeance of all your family, I am contented to run all risks. I will not ask you to retreat with *me;* I will attend you into the garden, and into the *house,* if I am not intercepted.

Nay, be not surprised, Madam. The help you would have called for, I will attend you to; for I will face them all: but not as a revenger, if they provoke me not too much. You shall see what I can further bear for your sake—and let us both see, if expostulation, and the behaviour of a gentleman *to* them, will not procure me the treatment due to a gentleman *from* them.

Had he offered to draw his sword upon himself, I was prepared to have despised him for supposing me such a poor novice as to be intimidated by an artifice so common. But this resolution, uttered with so serious an air, of accompanying me in to my friends, made me gasp with terror.

What mean you, Mr. Lovelace? said I: I beseech you, leave me—leave me, sir, I beseech you.

Excuse me, Madam! I beg you to excuse me. I have long enough skulked like a thief about these lonely walls—long, too long, have I borne the insults of your brother, and other of your relations. Absence but heightens malice. I am desperate. I have but this one chance for it; for is not the day after to-morrow *Wednesday?* I have encouraged virulence by my tameness.—Yet *tame* I will still be. You shall see, Madam, what I will bear for your sake. My sword shall be put sheathed into your hands [and he offered it to me in the scabbard].—My heart, if you please, clapping one hand upon his breast, shall afford a sheath for your

brother's sword. Life is nothing, if I lose you—be please Madam, to show me the way into the garden [movi towards the door]. I will attend you, though to my fa —But too happy, be it what it will, if I receive it in yo presence. Lead on, dear creature [putting his sword in his belt].—You shall see what I can bear for you. And stooped and took up the key; and offered it to the loc but dropped it again, without opening the door, upon n earnest expostulations.

What can you mean, Mr. Lovelace?—said I—wou you thus expose *yourself?* Would you thus expose *me?* Is this your generosity? Is everybody to take advanta thus of the weakness of my temper?

And I wept. I could not help it.

He threw himself upon his knees at my feet—Who c bear, said he [with an ardour that could not be feigne his own eyes glistering], who can bear to behold such swe emotion?—Oh, charmer of my heart [and, respectfully st kneeling, he took my hand with both his, pressing it to h lips], command me *with* you, command me *from* you; every way I am implicit to obedience—but I appeal to all yc know of your relations' cruelty to *you,* their determin malice against *me,* and as determined favour to the *man* yc tell me you hate (and, O Madam, if you did not hate hir I should hardly think there would be a merit in your appr bation, place it where you would)—I appeal to everythir you know, to all you have suffered, whether you have n reason to be apprehensive of *that* Wednesday, which is m terror!—whether you can possibly have such another oppo tunity—the chariot ready: my friends with impatience e pecting the result of *your own* appointment: a man who will shall be entirely your will, imploring you, thus, on h knees, imploring you—to be *your own mistress;* that is all *nor will I ask for your favour, but as upon full proof I sha appear to deserve it.* Fortune, alliance, unobjectionable!— Oh, my beloved creature! pressing my hand once more to h lips, let not such an opportunity slip. You never, nev will have such another.

I bid him rise. He arose; and I told him that were I not thus unaccountably hurried by his impatience, I doubted not to convince him that both he and I had looked upon next Wednesday with greater apprehension than was necessary. I was proceeding to give him my reasons; but he broke in upon me—

Had I, Madam, but the shadow of a probability to hope what *you* hope, I would be all obedience and resignation. But the license is actually got: the parson is provided: the pedant Brand is the man. Oh, my dearest creature, do these preparations mean only a trial?

You know not, sir, were the worst to be intended, and weak as you think me, what a spirit I have: you know not what I can do, and how I can resist when I think myself meanly or unreasonably dealt with: nor do you know what I have already suffered, what I have already borne, knowing to whose unbrotherly instigations all is to be ascribed——

I may expect all things, Madam, interrupted he, from the nobleness of your mind. But your spirits may fail you. What may not be apprehended, from the invincible temper of a father so positive, to a daughter so dutiful?—Fainting will not save you: they will not, perhaps, be sorry for such an effect of their barbarity. What will signify expostulations against a ceremony performed? Must not *all*, the *dreadful all* follow, that is torture to my heart but to think of? Nobody to appeal to, of what avail will your resistance be against the consequences of a rite witnessed to by the imposers of it, and those your nearest relations?

I was sure, I said, of procuring a delay at least. Many ways I had to procure a delay. Nothing could be so fatal to us both, as for me now to be found with him. My apprehensions on this score, I told him, grew too strong for my heart. I should think very hardly of him, if he sought to detain me longer. But his acquiescence should engage my gratitude.

And then stooping to take up the key to let myself into the garden, he started, and looked as if he had heard somebody near the door, on the inside; clapping his hand on his sword.

This frighted me so that I thought I should have sunk down at his feet. But he instantly re-assured me: He thought, he said, he had heard a rustling against the door: *had* it been so, the noise would have been stronger. It was only the effect of his apprehension for me.

And then taking up the key, he presented it to me.—If you *will* go, Madam—Yet, I cannot, cannot leave you!—I must enter the garden with you—forgive me, but I *must* enter the garden with you.

And will you, will you thus ungenerously, Mr. Lovelace, take advantage of my fears? of my wishes to prevent mischief? I, vain fool, to be concerned for every one; nobody for me!

Dearest creature, interrupted he, holding my hand, as I tremblingly offered to put the key to the lock—let *me*, if you *will* go, open the door. But once more, consider, could you possibly obtain that delay which seems to be your only dependence, whether you may not be closer confined. I know they have already had *that* in consideration. Will you not, in this case, be prevented from corresponding either with Miss Howe, or with me?—Who then shall assist you in your escape, if escape you would?—From your chamber-window only permitted to view the garden you must not enter into, how will you wish for the opportunity you now have, if your hatred to Solmes continue!—But, alas! that cannot continue. If you go back, it must be from the impulses of a yielding (which you'll call, a dutiful) heart, tired and teased out of your own will.

I have no patience, sir, to be thus constrained. Must I never be at liberty to follow my own judgment? Be the consequence what it may, I will not be thus constrained.

And then, freeing my hand, I again offered the key to the door.

Down the ready kneeler dropt between me and that: And can you, can you, Madam, once more on my knees let me ask you, look with an indifferent eye upon the evils that may follow? Provoked as I have been, and triumphed over as I shall be, if your brother succeeds, my *own* heart shudders,

at times, at the thoughts of what *must* happen. And can *yours* be unconcerned? Let me beseech you, dearest creature, to consider all these things; and lose not this only opportunity. My intelligence——

Never, Mr. Lovelace, interrupted I, give so much credit to the words of a traitor. Your base intelligencer is but a servant. He may pretend to know more than he has grounds for, in order to earn the wages of corruption. You know not what contrivances I can find out.

I was once more offering the key to the lock, when starting from his knees, with a voice of affrightment, loudly whispering, and as if out of breath, *They are at the door, my beloved creature!* and taking the key from me, he fluttered with it, as if he would double lock it. And instantly a voice from within cried out, bursting against the door, as if to break it open, the person repeating his violent pushes, *Are you there?—come up this moment!—this moment!—here they are—here they are both together!—your pistol this moment!—your gun!*—Then another push, and another. He at the same moment drew his sword, and clapping it naked under his arm, took both my trembling hands in his; and drawing me swiftly after him, Fly, fly, my charmer; this moment is all you have for it, said he.—Your brother! —your uncles!—or this Solmes!—they will instantly burst the door—fly, my dearest life, if you would not be more cruelly used than ever—if you would not see two or three murders committed at your feet, fly, fly, I beseech you.

O Lord:—help, help, cried the fool, all in amaze and confusion, frighted beyond the power of controlling.

Now behind me, now before me, now on this side, now on that, turned I my affrighted face, in the same moment; expecting a furious brother here, armed servants there, an enraged sister screaming, and a father armed with terror in his countenance more dreadful than even the drawn sword which I saw, or those I apprehended. I ran as fast as he; yet knew not that I ran; my fears adding wings to my feet, at the same time that they took all power of thinking from me—my fears, which probably would not

have suffered me to know what course to take, had I not had him to urge and draw me after him: especially as I beheld a man, who must have come out of the door, keeping us in his eye, running now towards us; then back to the garden; beckoning and calling to others whom I supposed *he* saw, although the turning of the wall hindered *me* from seeing them; and whom I imagined to be my brother, my father, and their servants.

Thus terrified, I was got out of sight of the door in a very few minutes: and then, although quite breathless between running and apprehension, he put my arm under his, his drawn sword in the other hand, and hurried me on still faster: my voice, however, contradicting my action; crying, no, no, no, all the while; straining my neck to look back as long as the walls of the garden and park were within sight, and till he brought me to the chariot: where, attending, were two armed servants of his own, and two of Lord M.'s on horseback.

Here I must suspend my relation for a while: for now I am come to this sad period of it, my indiscretion stares me in the face; and my shame and my grief give me a compunction that is more poignant methinks than if I had a dagger in my heart. To have it to reflect that I should so inconsiderately give in to an interview, which, had I known either myself or him, or in the least considered the circumstances of the case, I might have supposed would put me into the power of his resolution, and out of that of my own reason.

For, might I not have believed that *he*, who thought he had cause to apprehend that he was on the point of losing a person who had cost him so much pains and trouble, would not hinder her, if possible, from returning? That he, who knew I had promised to give him up for ever, if insisted on as a condition of reconciliation, would not endeavour to put it out of my power to do so? In short, that he, who had artfully forborne to send for my letter (for he could *not* be watched, my dear), lest he should find in it a countermand to my appointment (as I myself could

apprehend, although I profited by the apprehension), would want a device to keep me with him till the danger of having our meeting discovered might throw me absolutely into his power, to avoid my own worse usage, and the mischiefs which might have ensued (perhaps in my very sight) had my friends and he met?

But if it shall come out that the person within the garden was his corrupted implement, employed to frighten me away with him, do you think, my dear, that I shall not have reason to hate him and myself still more? I hope his heart cannot be so deep and so vile a one: I hope it cannot! But how came it to pass that one man could get out at the garden-door, and no more? how, that that man kept aloof, as it were, and pursued us not; nor ran back to alarm the house? my fright, and my distance, would not let me be certain; but really this man, as I now recollect, had the air of that vile Joseph Leman.

Oh why, why, my dear friends!—But wherefore blame I them, when I had argued myself into a hope, not improbable, that even the dreadful trial I was to undergo so soon might turn out better than if I had been directly carried away from the presence of my once indulgent parents, who might possibly intend that trial to be the last I should have had?

Would to Heaven that I had stood it, however! then if I had afterwards done, what now I have been prevailed upon, or perhaps foolishly frightened to do, I should not have been stung so much by inward reproach as now I am: and this would have been a great evil avoided.

You know, my dear, that your Clarissa's mind was ever above justifying her own failings by those of others. God forgive those of my friends who have acted cruelly by me! But their faults *are* their own, and not excuses for mine. And mine began early: for I ought not to have corresponded with him.

Oh, the vile encroacher! how my indignation, at times, rises at him! thus to lead a young creature (too much indeed relying upon her own strength) from evil to evil!—

This last evil, although the *remote*, yet *sure* consequence of my first—my prohibited correspondence! by a father *early* prohibited.

How much more properly had I acted, with regard to that correspondence, had I, once for all, when he was forbidden to visit me, and I to receive his visits, pleaded the authority by which I ought to have been bound, and denied to write to him!—But I thought I could *proceed*, or *stop*, as I pleased. I supposed it concerned *me, more than any other, to be the arbitress of the quarrels of unruly spirits.*—And now I find my presumption punished—punished, as other sins frequently are, by *itself!*

As to this last rashness; now that it is too late, I plainly see how I ought to have conducted myself. As he knew I had but one way of transmitting to him the knowledge of what befel me; as he knew that my fate was upon a crisis with my friends; and that I had in my letter to him reserved the liberty of revocation; I should not have been solicitous whether he had got my letter or not: when he had come, and found I did not answer his signal, he would presently have resorted to the loose bricks, and there been satisfied, by the date of my letter, that it was his own fault that he had it not before. But, *governed by the same pragmatical motives* which induced me to correspond with him at first, I was again afraid, truly, with my foolish and busy prescience; and the disappointment would have thrown him into the way of receiving fresh insults from the same persons; which might have made him guilty of some violence to them. And so to save him an *apprehended* rashness, I have rushed into a *real* one myself. And what vexes me more is, that it is plain to me now, by all his behaviour, that he had as great a confidence in my weakness as I had in my own strength. And so, in a point entirely relative to my honour, he has triumphed; for he has not been mistaken in me, while I have in myself!

Tell me, my dear Miss Howe, tell me truly, if your unbiassed heart does not despise me?—It must! for your mind and mine were ever *one:* and I despise *myself!*—And

well I may: for could the giddiest and most inconsiderate girl in England have done worse than I shall appear to have done in the eye of the world? Since my crime will be known without the provocations, and without the artifices of the betrayer too; while it will be a high aggravation, that better things were expected from me than from many others.

You charge me *to marry the first opportunity*—Ah! my dear! *another* of the blessed effects of my folly.—That's as much in my power now as—as I am myself!—And can I besides give a sanction immediately to his deluding arts?—Can I *avoid* being angry with him for tricking me thus, as I may say (and as I have called it to him), out of *myself?*—For compelling me to take a step so contrary to all my resolutions and assurances given to you; a step so dreadfully inconvenient to myself; so disgraceful and so grievous (as it must be) to my dear mother, were I to be less regardful of any other of my family or friends?—You don't know, nor can you imagine, my dear, how I am mortified!—How much I am sunk in my own opinion! I, that was proposed for an example, truly, to others!—Oh, that I were again in my father's house, stealing down with a letter *to* you; my heart beating with expectation of finding one *from* you!

This is the Wednesday morning I dreaded so much, that I once thought of it as the day of my doom: but of the Monday, it is plain I ought to have been most apprehensive. Had I stayed, and had the worst I dreaded happened, my friends would then have been answerable for the consequences, if any bad ones had followed:—but now I have this *only* consolation left me (a very poor one, you'll say), that I have cleared *them* of blame, and taken it all upon *myself!*

You will not wonder to see this narrative so dismally scrawled. It is owing to different pens and ink, all bad, and written by snatches of time; my hand trembling too with fatigue and grief.

I will not add to the length of it by the particulars of his behaviour to me, and of our conversation at St. Alban's,

and since; because those will come in course in the continuation of my story; which, no doubt, you will expect from me.

Only thus much I will say, that he is extremely respectful (even obsequiously so) at present, though I am so much dissatisfied with him and myself that he has hitherto had no great cause to praise my complaisance to him. Indeed I can hardly at times bear the seducer in my sight.

The lodgings I am in are inconvenient. I shall not stay in them: so it signifies nothing to tell you how to direct to me hither. And where my next may be, as yet I know not.

He knows that I am writing to you; and has offered to send my letter, when finished, by a servant of his. But I thought I could not be too cautious, as I am now situated, in having a letter of this importance conveyed to you. Who knows what such a man may do? So very wicked a contriver! The contrivance, if a contrivance, to get me away, so insolently mean!—But I hope it is not a contrivance neither!—Yet be that as it will, I must say that the *best* of him, and of my prospects with him, are bad: and yet, having enrolled myself among the too-late repenters, who shall pity me?

Nevertheless, I will dare to hope for a continued interest in your affections [I shall be miserable indeed if I may not!], and to be remembered in your daily prayers. For neither time nor accident shall ever make me cease to be

Your faithful and affectionate

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

—o—

LETTER XVIII.

Mr. Lovelace to Joseph Leman.

Saturday, April 8.

HONEST JOSEPH,—At length your beloved young lady has consented to free herself from the cruel treatment she has so long borne. She is to meet me without the garden door

at about four o'clock on Monday afternoon. I told you she had promised to do so. She has confirmed her promise. Thank Heaven, she has confirmed her promise!

I shall have a chariot and six ready in the by-road fronting the private path to Harlowe paddock; and several of my friends and servants not far off, armed to protect her, if there be occasion: but every one charged to avoid mischief. That, you know, has always been my principal care.

All my fear is, that when she comes to the point, the over-niceness of her principles will make her waver, and want to go back: although *her* honour is *my* honour, you know, and *mine* is *hers*. If she should, and should I be unable to prevail upon her, all your past services will avail nothing, and she will be lost to me for ever: the prey then of that cursed Solmes, whose vile stinginess will never permit him to do good to any of the servants of the family.

I have no doubt of your fidelity, honest Joseph; nor of your zeal to serve an injured gentleman, and an oppressed young lady. You see by the confidence I repose in you, that I have *not;* more particularly, on this very important occasion, in which your assistance may crown the work: for, if she waver, a little innocent contrivance will be necessary.

Be very mindful, therefore, of the following directions; take them into your heart. This will probably be your last trouble, until my beloved and I are joined in holy wedlock: and then we will be sure to take care of you. You know what I have promised. No man ever reproached me for breach of word.

These, then, honest Joseph, are they:

Contrive to be in the garden, in *disguise*, if possible, and unseen by your young lady. If you find the garden door unbolted, you will know that she and I are together, although you should not see her go out at it. It will be locked, but my key shall be on the ground just without the door, that you may open it with your's, as it may be needful.

If you hear our voices parleying, keep at the door till I cry Hem, hem, twice: but be watchful for this signal; for I must not hem very loud, lest she should take it for a

signal. Perhaps in struggling to prevail upon the dear creature, I may have an opportunity to strike the door hard with my elbow, or heel, to confirm you—then you are to make a violent burst against the door, as if you would break it open, drawing backward and forward the bolt in a hurry: then, with another push, but with more noise than strength, lest the lock give way, cry out (as if you saw some of the family), Come up, come up, instantly! —Here they are! Here they are!—Hasten—This instant! hasten! And mention swords, pistols, guns, with as terrible a voice as you can cry out with. Then shall I prevail upon her, no doubt, if loth before, to fly. If I cannot, I will enter the garden with her, and the house too, be the consequence what it will. But, so affrighted, there is no question but she will fly.

When you think us at a sufficient distance [and I shall raise my voice urging her swifter flight, that you may guess at *that*], then open the door with your key: but you must be sure to open it very cautiously, lest we should not be far enough off. I would not have her know you have a hand in this matter, out of my great regard to you.

When you have opened the door, take your key out of the lock, and put it in your pocket: then, stooping for mine, put it in the lock on the *inside*, that it may appear as if the door was opened by herself, with a key, which they will suppose of my procuring (it being new) and left open by us.

They *should* conclude she is gone off by her own consent that they may not pursue us: that they may see no hopes of tempting her back again. In either case, mischief might happen, you know.

But you must take notice that you are only to open the door with your key, in case none of the family come up to interrupt us, and before we are quite gone: for, if they do, you'll find by what follows, that you must not open the door at all. Let them, on breaking it open, or by getting over the wall, find my key on the ground, if they will.

If they do not come to interrupt us, and if you, by help

of your key, come out, follow us at a distance; and, with uplifted hands, and wild and impatient gestures (running backward and forward, for fear you should come too near us, and as if you saw somebody coming to your assistance), cry out for help, help, and to hasten. Then shall we be soon at the chariot.

Tell the family that you saw me enter a chariot with her: a dozen, or more, men on horseback attended us; all armed; some with blunderbusses, as you believe; and that we took quite the contrary way to that we shall take.

You see, honest Joseph, how careful I am, as well as you, to avoid mischief.

Observe to keep at such a distance that she may not discover who you are. Take long strides, to alter your gait; and hold up your head, honest Joseph: and she'll not know it to be you. Men's airs and gaits are as various and as peculiar as their faces. Pluck a stake out of one of the hedges: and tug at it, though it may come easy: this, if she turn back, will look terrible, and account for your not following us faster. Then, returning with it, shouldered, brag to the family what you would have done, could you have overtaken us, rather than your young lady should have been carried off by such a —— And you may call me names, and curse me. And these airs will make you look valiant, and in earnest. You see, honest Joseph, I am always contriving to give *you* reputation. No man suffers by serving me.

But if our parley should last longer than I wish; and if any of her friends miss her before I cry, Hem, hem, twice; then, in order to save yourself (which is a very great point with me, I assure you), make the same noise as above: but, as I directed before, open not the door with your key. On the contrary, wish for a key with all your heart; but for fear any of them should by accident have a key about them, keep in readiness half a dozen little gravel-stones, no bigger than peas, and thrust two or three slily into the key-hole; which will hinder their key from turning round. It is good, you know, Joseph, to provide against every accident

in such an important case as this. And let this be your cry, instead of the other, if any of my enemies come in your sight, as you seem to be trying to burst the door open, Sir! Sir! or Madam! Madam! O Lord, hasten! O Lord, hasten! Mr. Lovelace! Mr. Lovelace!—And very loud—and that shall quicken me more than it shall those you call to.—If it be Betty, and only Betty, I shall think worse of your art of making love* than of your fidelity, if you can't find a way to amuse her, and put her upon a false scent.

You must tell them that your young lady seemed to run as fast off with me as I with her. This will also confirm to them that all pursuit is in vain. An end will hereby be put to Solmes's hopes: and her friends, after a while, will be more studious to be reconciled to her than to get her back. So you will be a happy instrument of great good to all round. And this will one day be acknowledged by both families. You will then be every one's favourite; and every good servant, for the future, will be proud to be likened to honest Joseph Leman.

If she should guess at you, or find you out, I have it already in my head to write a letter for you to copy,† which, occasionally produced, will set you right with her.

This one time be diligent, be careful: this will be the crown of all: and once more, depend, for a recompense, upon the honour of

Your assured friend,

R. LOVELACE.

You need not be so much afraid of going too far with Betty. If you *should* make a match with her, she is a very likely creature, though a vixen, as you say. I have an admirable receipt to cure a termagant wife.—Never fear, Joseph, but thou shalt be master of thine house. If she be very troublesome, I can teach thee how to break her heart in a twelvemonth; and *honestly* too;—or the precept would not be mine.

I enclose a new earnest of my future favour.

* See Letter LXXIII. of vol. i. † See Letter XXXVI. of this volume.

LETTER XIX.

To Robert Lovelace, Esquier, his Honner.

Sunday Morning, April 9.

HONNERED SIR,—I must confesse I am infinnitely obliged to your Honner's bounty. But this last command! —It seems so intricket! Lord be merciful to me, how have I been led from littel stepps to grate stepps!—And if I should be found out!—But your Honner says you will take me into your Honner's sarvise, and proteckt me, if as I should at any time be found out; and raise my wages besides; or set me upp in a good inne; which is my ambishion. And you will be honnerable and kind to my dearest young lady, God love her.—But who can be unkind to she?

I will do the best I am able, since your Honner will be apt to lose her, as your Honner says, if I do not; and a man so stingie will be apt to gain her. But mayhap my deareste young lady will not make all this trubble needful. If she has promissed, she will stand to it, I dare to say.

I love your Honner for contriveing to save mischiff so well. I thought till I know'd your Honner, that you was verry mischevous, and plese your Honner: but find it to be clene contrary. Your Honner, it is plane, means mighty well by everybody, as far as I see. As I am sure I do myself; for I am, althoff a very plane man, and all that, a very honnest one, I thank my God. And have good principels, and have kept my young lady's pressepts always in mind: for she goes no where, but saves a soul or two, more or less.

So, commending myself to your Honner's further favour, not forgetting the inne, when your Honner shall so please, and a good one offers; for plases are no inherritanses now-a-days. And I hope your Honner will not think me a dishonest man for sarvinge your Honner agenst my duty, as it may look; but only as my conshence clears me.

Be pleased, howsomever, if it like your Honner, not t call me *honnest Joseph*, and *honnest Joseph*, so often. Fo althoff I think myself verry honnest, and all that, yet am touched a littel, for fear I should not do the quit right thing: and too besides, your Honner has such fesseshious way with you, as that I hardly know whethe you are in jest or earnest, when your Honner calls m honnest so often.

I am a very plane man, and seldom have writ to suc honourable gentlemen; so you will be good enuff to pa by everything, as I have often said, and need not now sa over again.

As to Mrs. Betty; I tho'te, indeed, she looked abo me. But she comes on vere well, nathelsse. I could lik her better, iff she was better to my young lady. But sh has too much wit for so plane a man. Natheless, if sh was to angre me, althoff it is a shame to bete a woma yet I colde make shift to throe my hat at her, or so, yo Honner.

But that same reseit, iff your Honner so please, to cu a shrowish wife. It would more encurrege to wed, iff s be one know'd it beforehand, as one may say. So lik wise, if one knoed one could *honnestly*, as your Honn says, and as of the handy-work of God, in one twelv month—

But I shall grow impartinent to such a grate man.- And *hereafter* may do for that, as she turnes out: for o mought be loth to part with her, mayhap, so *verry* so too; espessially if she was to make the notable lanla your Honner put into my head.

Butt wonce moer, begging your Honner's parden, a promissing all dilligence and exsacknesse, I reste,

Your Honner's dewtiful sarvant to command,

JOSEPH LEMAN.

LETTER XX.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

St. Alban's, Monday Night.

I SNATCH a few moments while my beloved is retired [as I hope, to rest], to perform my promise. No pursuit—nor have I apprehensions of any; though I must make my charmer dread that there will be one.

And now let me tell thee that never was joy so complete as mine!—But let me inquire, is not the angel flown away?

OH no! She is in the next apartment!—Securely mine!—Mine for ever!

> Oh ecstasy!—My heart will burst my breast,
> To leap into her bosom!

I knew that the whole stupid family were in a combination to do my business for me. I told thee that they were all working for me, like so many underground moles; and still more blind than the moles are said to be, unknowing that they did so. I myself, the director of their principal motions; which falling in with the malice of their little hearts, they took to be all their own.

But did I say my joy was perfect?—Oh no!—It receives some abatement from my disgusted bride. For how can I endure to think that I owe more to her relations' precautions than to her favour for me?—Or even, as far as I know, to her preference of me to another man?

But let me not indulge this thought. Were I to do so, it might cost my charmer dear. Let me rejoice that she has passed the rubicon: that she cannot return: that, as I have ordered it, the flight will appear to the implacables to be altogether with her own consent: and that if I doubt her love, I can put her to trials as mortifying to her niceness as glorious to my pride.—For let me tell thee, dearly as I love her, if I thought there was but the shadow of a doubt in her mind, whether she preferred me to any man living, I would show her no mercy.

Tuesday, Day-dawn.

BUT, on the wings of love, I fly to my charmer, who perhaps by this time is rising to encourage the tardy dawn. I have not slept a wink of the hour and half I lay down to invite sleep. It seems to me that I am not so much body as to require such vulgar renovation.

But why, as in the chariot, as in the inn, at alighting, all heart-bursting grief, my dearest creature? So persecuted as thou wert persecuted!—So much in danger of the most abhorred compulsion!—Yet grief so *unsuspectedly* sincere for an escape so critical!—Take care, take care, oh beloved of my soul! for jealous is the heart in which love has erected a temple to thee.

Yet it must be allowed that such a sudden transition must affect her; must ice her over. When a little more used to her new situation; when her hurries are at an end; when she sees how religiously I shall observe all her INJUNCTIONS; she will undoubtedly have the gratitude to distinguish between the confinement she has escaped from, and the liberty she has reason to rejoice in.

She comes! She comes! And the sun is just rising to attend her! Adieu! Be half as happy as I am (for all diffidencies, like night-fogs before the sun, disperse at her approach), and, next myself, thou wilt be the happiest man in the world.

—o—

LETTER XXI.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Wednesday, April 12.

I WILL pursue my melancholy story.

Being thus hurried to the chariot, it would have been to no purpose to have refused entering into it, had he not in my fright lifted me in, as he did: and it instantly drove away at full gallop, and stopped not till it brought us to St. Alban's: which was just as the day shut in.

I thought I should have fainted several times by the way. With uplifted hands and eyes, God protect me! said I often to myself: Can it be I that am here! My eyes running over, and my heart ready to burst with sighs as involuntary as my flight.

How different, how inexpressibly different, the gay wretch; visibly triumphing (as I could not but construe his almost rapturous joy) in the success of his arts! But overflowing with complimental flourishes, yet respectfully distant his address, all the way we *flew*; for that, rather than *galloping*, was the motion of the horses; which took, as I believe, a roundabout way, to prevent being traced.

I have reason to think there were other horsemen at his devotion; three or four different persons, above the rank of servants, galloping by us now and then on each side of the chariot: but he took no notice of them; and I had too much grief, mingled with indignation, notwithstanding all his blandishments, to ask any questions about them, or anything else.

Think, my dear, what were my thoughts on alighting from the chariot; having no attendant of my own sex; no clothes but what I had on, and those little suited to such a journey as I had *already* taken, and was *still* to take: neither hood nor hat, nor anything but a handkerchief round my head and shoulders: fatigued to death: my mind still more fatigued than my body: and in such a foam the horses, that every one in the inn we put up at guessed [they could not do otherwise] that I was a young giddy creature who had run away from her friends. This it was easy to see by their whispering and gaping: more of the people of the house also coming in by turns than were necessary for the attendance.

The mistress of the house, whom he sent in to me, showed me another apartment; and seeing me ready to faint, brought me hartshorn and water; and then, upon my desiring to be left alone for half an hour, retired; for I found my heart ready to burst, on revolving everything in my thoughts: and the moment she was gone, fastening the door, I threw myself into an old great chair, and gave way to a violent flood of tears, which a little relieved me.

Mr. Lovelace, sooner than I wished, sent up the gentlewoman, who pressed me, in his name, to admit my brother, or to come down to him: for he had told her I was his sister; and that he had brought me, against my will, and without warning, from a friend's house, where I had been all the winter, in order to prevent my marrying against the consent of my friends; to whom he was now conducting me; and that, having given me no time for a travelling-dress, I was greatly offended at him.

So, my dear, your frank, your open-hearted friend, was forced to countenance this tale; which indeed suited me the better, because I was unable for some time to talk, speak, or look up; and so my dejection, and grief, and silence, might very well pass before the gentlewoman and her niece who attended me, as a fit of sullenness.

The room I was in being a bed-chamber, I chose to go down, at his repeated message, attended by the mistress of the house, to that in which he was. He approached me with great respect, yet not exceeding a brotherly politeness, where a brother *is* polite; and calling me his dearest sister, asked after the state of my mind; and hoped I would forgive him; for never brother half so well loved a sister as he me.

A wretch! how naturally did he fall into the character, although I was so much out of mine!

Unthinking creatures have some comforts in the shortness of their views; in their unapprehensiveness; and that they penetrate not beyond the present moment: in short that they *are* unthinking!—But for a person of my thoughtful disposition, who has been accustomed to look forward, as well to the *possible*, as to the *probable*, what comfort can I have in my reflections?

But let me give you the particulars of our conversation a little before and after our supper-time, joining both in one.

When we were alone, he besought me (I cannot say but with all the tokens of a passionate and respectful tenderness) to be better reconciled to myself and to him: he repeated all the vows of honour and inviolable affection that he ever

made me: he promised to be wholly governed by me in every future step. He asked me to give him leave to propose whether I chose to set out next day to either of his aunts?

I was silent. I knew not what to say, nor what to do.

Whether I chose to have private lodgings procured for me in either of those ladies' neighbourhood, as were once my thoughts?

I was still silent.

Whether I chose to go to either of Lord M.'s seats; that of Berks, or that in the county we were in?

In lodgings, I said, anywhere, where he was not to be.

He had *promised this*, he owned; and he would religiously keep to his word, as soon as he found all danger of pursuit over; and that I was settled to my mind. But if the place were indifferent to me, London was the safest and the most private: and his relations should all visit me there, the moment I thought fit to admit them. His cousin Charlotte, particularly, should attend me as my companion, if I would accept of her, as soon as she was able to go abroad. Meantime, would I go to Lady Betty Lawrance's (Lady Sarah was a melancholy woman), I should be the most welcome guest she ever received.

I told him I wished not to go (immediately, however, and in the frame I was in, and not likely to be out of) to any of his relations: that my reputation was concerned, to have *him* absent from me: that if I were in some private lodging, the meaner the less to be suspected (as it would be known that I went away by his means; and he would be supposed to have provided me handsome accommodations), it would be most suitable both to my mind and to my situation: that this might be best, I should think, in the country for *me;* in town for *him.* And no matter how soon he was known to be there.

If he might deliver his opinion, he said it was, that since I declined going to any of his relations, London was the only place in the world to be private in. Every new comer in a country town or village excited a curiosity: a person

of my figure [and many compliments he made me] would excite more. Even messages and letters, where none used to be brought, would occasion inquiry. He had not provided a lodging anywhere, supposing I would choose to go either to London, where accommodations of that sort might be fixed upon in an hour's time, or to Lady Betty's; or to Lord M.'s Hertfordshire seat, where was the housekeeper, an excellent woman, Mrs. Greme, such another as my Norton.

To be sure, I said, if I were pursued, it would be in their first passion; and some one of *his* relations' houses would be the place they would expect to find me at—I knew not what to do.

My pleasure should determine him, he said, be it what it would. Only that I were safe, was all he was solicitous about. He had lodgings in town; but he did not offer to propose them. He knew I would have more objections to go to them, than I could have to go to Lord M.'s, or to Lady Betty's.

No doubt of it, I replied, with such an indignation in my manner, as made him run over with professions that he was far from proposing them, or wishing for my acceptance of them. And again he repeated that my honour and safety were all he was solicitous about; assuring me that my will should be a law to him in every particular.

I was too peevish, and too much afflicted, and indeed too much incensed against him, to take well anything he said.

I thought myself, I said, extremely unhappy. I knew not what to determine upon: my reputation now, no doubt, utterly ruined: destitute of clothes: unfit to be seen by anybody: my very indigence, as I might call it, proclaiming my folly to every one who saw me; who would suppose that I had been taken at advantage, or had given an undue one; and had no power over either my will or my actions: that I could not but think I had been dealt artfully with: that he had seemed to have taken, what he might suppose the just measure of my weakness, founded on my youth and inexperience: that I could not forgive myself for meeting

him: that my heart bled for the distresses of my father and mother on this occasion: that I would give the world, and all my hopes in it, to have been still in my father's house, whatever had been my usage: that, let him protest and vow what he would, I saw something low and selfish in his love, that he could study to put a young creature upon making such a sacrifice of her duty and conscience: when a person, actuated by a generous love, must seek to oblige the object of it in everything essential to her honour, and to her peace of mind.

He was very attentive to all I said, never offering to interrupt me once. His answer to every article, almost methodically, showed his memory.

'What I had said, he told me, made him very grave; and 'he would answer accordingly.

'He was grieved at his heart to find that he had so little 'share in my favour or confidence.

'As to my *reputation* (he must be very sincere with me), 'that could not suffer half so much by the step I so greatly 'regretted to have taken, as by the confinement, and equally 'foolish and unjust treatment I had met with from my re-'lations: that every mouth was full of blame of them, of 'my brother and sister particularly; and of wonder at my 'patience: that he must repeat what he had written to me 'he believed more than once, that my friends themselves ex-'pected that I should take a proper opportunity to free my-'self from their persecutions; why else did they confine me? 'That my exalted character, as he called it, would still bear 'me out, with those who knew *me;* who knew my *brother's* 'and *sister's* motives; and who knew the wretch they were 'for compelling me to have.

'With regard to *clothes;* who, as matters were circum-'stanced, could expect that I should be able to bring away 'any others than those I had on at the time? For *present* 'use or wear, all the ladies of his family would take a pride 'to supply me: for *future,* the product of the best looms, 'not only in England, but throughout the world, were at 'my command.

'If I wanted *money*, as no doubt I must, he should b
'proud to supply me: Would to heaven, he might presum
'to hope there were but one interest between us!'

And then he would fain have had me to accept of a ban note of a hundred pounds; which, unawares to me, he pu into my hand: but which, you may be sure, I refused wit warmth.

'He was inexpressibly grieved and surprised, he said, t 'hear me say he had acted *artfully* by me. He came pre 'vided, according to my *confirmed* appointment' [*a wretc to upbraid me thus!*] 'to redeem me from my persecutors 'and little expected a change of sentiment, and that h 'should have so much difficulty to prevail upon me, as h 'had met with: that perhaps I might think his offer to g '*into the garden with me*, and to face my assembled relation 'was a piece of *art only*: but that if I did, I wronged him 'since to this hour, seeing my excessive uneasiness, h 'wished with all his soul he had been permitted to accom 'pany me in. It was always his maxim to brave a threa 'tened danger. Threateners, where they have an opportunit 'to put in force their threats, were seldom to be feare 'But had he been assured of a private stab, or of as man 'death's wounds as there were persons in my family (mad 'desperate as he should have been by my return), he woul 'have attended me into the house.'

So, my dear, what I have to do, is to hold myself inexcu able for meeting such a determined and audacious spirit that's all! I have hardly any question now, but that he woul have contrived some wicked stratagem or other to have go me away, had I met him at a midnight hour, as once or twic I had thoughts to do; and that would have been mor terrible still.

He concluded this part of his talk with saying, 'That h 'doubted not but that, had he attended me in, he shoul 'have come off in every one's opinion so well that he shoul 'have had general leave to renew his visits.'

He went on—'He must be so bold as to tell me, that h 'should have paid a visit of this kind (but indeed accom

'panied by several of his trusty friends), had I *not* met him; 'and that very afternoon too; for he could not tamely let 'the dreadful Wednesday come, without making some effort 'to change their determinations.'

What, my dear, was to be done with such a man!

'That therefore for my sake, as well as for his own, he 'had reason to wish that a disease so desperate had been 'attempted to be overcome by as desperate a remedy. We 'all know, said he, that great ends are sometimes brought 'about by the very means by which they are endeavoured 'to be frustrated.'

My present situation, I am sure, thought I, affords a sad evidence of this truth!

I was silent all this time. My blame was indeed turned inward. Sometimes, too, I was half-frighted at his audaciousness: at others, had the less inclination to interrupt him, being excessively fatigued, and my spirits sunk to nothing, with the view even of the best prospects with such a man.

This gave him opportunity to proceed: and that he did; assuming a still more serious air.

'As to what further remained for him to say, in answer to 'what I had said, he hoped I would pardon him; but, upon 'his soul, he was concerned, infinitely concerned, he repeated '(his colour and his voice rising), that it was *necessary* for 'him to observe how much I chose rather to have run the 'risk of being Solmes's wife, than to have it in my power 'to reward a man who, I must forgive him, had been as 'much insulted on my account, as *I* had been on *his*—who 'had watched my commands, and (pardon me, Madam) 'every *changeable* motion of your pen, all hours, in all 'weathers, and with a cheerfulness and ardour that nothing 'but the most faithful and obsequious passion could inspire.'

I now, my dear, began to revive into a little more warmth of attention.—

'And all, Madam, for what?'—How I stared! for he stopt then a moment or two—'*Only*,' went he on, 'to pre-'vail upon you to free yourself from ungenerous and base 'oppression'——

Sir, sir! indignantly said I—

'Hear me but out, dearest Madam!—My heart is full- 'must speak what I have to say—To be told (for your wo 'are yet in my ears, and at my heart!) that you would gi 'the world, *and all your hopes in it*, to have been still in yo 'cruel and gloomy father's house'——

Not a word, sir, against my father!—I will not be that——

'*Whatever had been your usage*:—and you have a cred 'lity, Madam, against all probability, if you believe y 'should have avoided being Solmes's wife: That I have p 'you upon *sacrificing your duty and conscience*—yet, dear 'creature! see you not the contradiction that your warm 'of temper has surprised you into, when the reluctance y 'showed to the last to leave your persecutors, has clear 'your conscience from the least reproach of this sort?'—

Oh, sir! sir! are you so critical then? Are you so light your anger as to dwell upon words?

Indeed, my dear, I have since thought that his anger w not owing to that sudden *impetus* which cannot be easi bridled; but rather was a sort of *manageable* anger let loo to intimidate me.

'Forgive me, Madam—I have just done—Have I no 'in your own opinion, hazarded my life to redeem you fro 'oppression? Yet is not my reward, after all, precarious '—For, Madam, *have you not conditioned with me* (and har 'as the condition is, *most sacredly will I observe it*) *that al 'my hope must be remote?* That you are determined t 'have it in your power *to favour or reject me totally*, a 'you please?'

See, my dear! in every respect my condition change for the worst! Is it in *my power* to take your advice, i I should think it ever so right to take it?*

* Clarissa has been censured as behaving to Mr. Lovelace, in their fir conversation at St. Alban's, and afterwards, with too much reserve, and eve with haughtiness. Surely those who have thought her to blame on th account, have not paid a due attention to the story. How early, as abov and in what immediately follows, does he remind her of the terms of distan

'And have you not furthermore declared,' proceeded he, '*that you will engage to renounce me for ever, if your friends* '*insist upon that cruel renunciation, as the terms of being* '*reconciled to you?*

'But nevertheless, Madam, all the merit of having saved 'you from an odious compulsion, shall be mine. I glory in 'it, though I were to lose you for ever. *As I see I am but* '*too likely to do,* from your present displeasure; and espe- 'cially, *if your friends insist upon the terms you are ready to* '*comply with.*

'That you are *your own mistress,* through *my* means, is, I 'repeat, my boast. *As such,* I humbly implore your favour, 'and *that only upon the conditions I have yielded to hope for* '*it.* As I do now, *thus humbly* [the proud wretch falling 'on one knee], your forgiveness, for so long detaining your 'ear, and for all the plain dealing that my undesigning heart 'would not be denied to utter by my lips.'

Oh, sir, pray rise! Let the obliged kneel, if one of us must kneel! But, nevertheless, proceed not in this strain, I *beseech* you. You have had a great *deal* of trouble about me: but had you let me know *in time,* that you expected to be rewarded for it at the price of my duty, I should have spared you much of it.

Far be it from me, sir, to depreciate merit so *extraordinary.* But let me say that had it not been for the forbidden correspondence I was teased by you into; and which I had not continued (every letter, for many letters, intended to be the last) but because I thought you a sufferer from my friends; I had not been either confined or ill-treated: nor would my brother's low-meant violence have had a foundation to work upon.

which she prescribed to him, before she was in his power, *in hopes to leave the door open for a reconciliation with her friends,* which her heart was set upon? And how artfully does he (unrequired) promise to observe the conditions which she in her present circumstances and situation (in pursuance of Miss Howe's advice) would gladly have dispensed with?—To say nothing of the resentment she was under a *necessity* to show, at the manner of his getting her away, in order to justify to him *the sincerity of her refusal to go off with him.* See, in her subsequent Letter to Miss Howe, No. XXIV., her own sense upon this subject.

I am far from thinking my case would have been so ve desperate as you imagine, had I stayed. My father lov me in his heart: he would not see me before; and I want *only* to *see* him, and to be *heard*; and a *delay of his senten* was the least thing I expected from the trial I was to stan

You are boasting of your merits, sir: let merit *be* yo boast; nothing else can attract me. If *personal* consider tions had principal weight with me, either in Solmes's di favour, or in your favour, I should despise *myself*: if y value yourself upon them, in preference to the *person* of t poor Solmes, I shall despise *you!*

You may glory in your fancied merits in getting n away: but the cause of *your* glory, I tell you plainly, *my* shame.

Make to yourself a title to my regard, which I can bett approve of; or else you will not have so much merit wi *me*, as you have with *yourself*.

But here, sir, like the first pair (I, at least, driven out my paradise), are we recriminating. No more shall y need to tell me of your *sufferings*, and your *merits!* your *hours*, and *all weathers!* For I will bear them in memo as long as I live; and if it be impossible for me to *rewa* them, be ever ready to *own* the obligation. All that I desi of you now is, to leave it to myself to seek for some priva abode: to take the chariot with you to London, or el where: and if I have any further occasion for your assistan and protection, I will signify it to you, and be still *furth* obliged to you.

You are warm, my dearest life!—But indeed there is occasion for it. Had I any views unworthy of my faithf love for you, I should not have been so honest in n declarations.

Then he began again to vow the sincerity of his inte tions——

But I took him up short: I am willing to *believe* yo sir. It would be insupportable but to suppose there were *necessity* for such solemn declarations. [At this he seem to collect himself, as I may say, into a little more circu

spection.] If I thought there *were*, I would not sit with you here, in a public inn, I assure you, although cheated hither, as far as I know, by methods (you must excuse me, sir) which, but to *suspect*, will hardly let me have patience either with you or with myself—but no more of this, just now. Let me, I beseech you, *good sir*, bowing [I was very angry!], let me only know whether you intend to leave me; or whether I have only escaped from one confinement to another?

Cheated hither, as far as I know, Madam! Let you *know* (and with that air too, charming, though grievous to my heart) *if you have only escaped from one confinement to another*—amazing! perfectly amazing! And can there be a necessity for me to answer this? You are absolutely your own mistress—it were very strange, if you were not. *The moment you are in a place of safety*, I will leave you. To one condition only, give me leave to beg your consent: it is this, that you will be pleased, now you are so entirely in your own power, to renew a promise *voluntarily* made before; *voluntarily*, or I would not *now* presume to request it; for although I would not be thought capable of growing upon concession, yet I cannot bear to think of losing the ground your goodness had given me room to hope I had gained; 'That, make up how you please with your relations, you 'will never marry any other man, while I am living and 'single, unless I should be so wicked as to give new cause 'for high displeasure.'

I hesitate not to confirm this promise, sir, upon your *own* condition. In what manner do you expect to confirm it?

Only, Madam, by your word.

Then I never will.

He had the assurance (*I was now in his power*) to salute me as a sealing of my promise, as he called it. His motion was so sudden, that I was not aware of it. It would have looked *affected* to be very angry; yet I could not be pleased considering this as a *leading freedom*, from a spirit so audacious and encroaching: and he might see that I was not.

He passed all that by with an air peculiar to himself—

Enough, enough, dearest Madam! And now let me beg o you but to conquer this dreadful uneasiness, which gives m to apprehend too much for my jealous love to bear; and i shall be my whole endeavour to deserve your favour, and t make you the happiest woman in the world; as I shall b the happiest of men.

I broke from him to write to you my preceding letter but refused to send it by his servant, as I told you. Th mistress of the house helped me to a messenger, who was t carry what you should give him to Lord M.'s seat in Hert fordshire, directed for Mrs. Greme, the housekeeper there. And early in the morning, for fear of pursuit, we were to set out that way: and there he proposed to change the chariot and six for a chaise and pair of his own, which he had at that seat, as it would be a less noticed conveyance.

I looked over my little stock of money; and found it to be no more than seven guineas and some silver: the rest of my stock was but fifty guineas, and that five more than I thought it was, when my sister challenged me as to the sum I had by me*: and those I left in my escritoire, little intending to go away with him.

Indeed my case abounds with a shocking number of indelicate circumstances. Among the rest, I was forced to account to *him*, who knew I could have no clothes but what I had on, how I came to have linen with you (for he could not but know I sent for it); lest he should imagine I had an early design to go away with him, and made that a *part of the preparation.*

He most heartily wished, he said, for my mind's sake, that your mother would have afforded me her protection; and delivered himself upon this subject with equal *freedom* and concern.

There are, my dear Miss Howe, a multitude of punctilios and decorums, which a young creature must dispense with, who, in a situation like mine, makes a man the intimate attendant of her person. I could now, I think, give twenty reasons stronger than any I have heretofore mentioned

* See vol. i. Letter XLIII.

why women of the *least delicacy* should never think of incurring the danger and disgrace of taking the step I have been drawn in to take, but with horror and aversion; and why they should look upon the man who should tempt them to it, as the vilest and most selfish of seducers.

BEFORE five o'clock (Tuesday morning) the maid-servant came up to tell me my *brother* was ready, and that breakfast also waited for me in the parlour. I went down with a heart as heavy as my eyes, and received great acknowledgments and compliments from him on being so soon dressed, and ready (as he interpreted it) to continue our journey.

He had the thought which I had not (for what had I to do with thinking, who had it not when I stood most in need of it?), to purchase for me a velvet hood, and a short cloak, trimmed with silver, without saying anything to me. He must reward himself, the artful encroacher said, before the landlady and her maids and niece, for his forethought; and would salute his pretty sullen sister!—He took his reward; and, as he said, a tear with it. While he assured me, still before them [a vile wretch!], that I had nothing to fear from meeting with parents who so dearly loved me.

How could I be complaisant, my dear, to such a man as this?

When we had got into the chariot, and it began to move, he asked me whether I had any objection to go to Lord M.'s Hertfordshire seat? His lordship, he said, was at his Berkshire one.

I told him I chose not to go, *as yet*, to any of his relations; for that would indicate a plain defiance to my own. My choice was to go to a private lodging, and for him to be at a distance from me: at least, till I heard how things were taken by my friends: for that, although I had but little hopes of a reconciliation as it *was*; yet if they knew I was in his protection, or in that of any of his friends (which would be looked upon as the same thing), there would not be room for any hopes at all.

I should govern him as I pleased, he solemnly assured

me, in everything. But he still thought *London* was the best place for me; and if I were once safe there, and in lodging to my liking, he would go to M. Hall. But as approved not of London, he would urge it no further.

He proposed, and I consented, to put up at an inn in the neighbourhood of *The Lawn* (as he called Lord M.'s seat in this county), since I chose not to go thither. And here I got two hours to myself; which I told him I should pass in writing another letter to you (meaning my narrative, which, though greatly fatigued, I had begun at St. Alban's), and in one to my sister, to apprise the family (whether they were solicitous about it or not) that I was well; and to beg that my clothes, some particular books, and the fifty guineas I had left in my escritoire, might be sent me.

He asked if I had considered whither to have them directed?

Indeed, not I, I told him: I was a stranger to——

So was he, he interrupted me; but it struck him by chance——

Wicked story-teller!

But, added he, I will tell you, Madam, how it shall be managed—if you don't choose to go to London, it is, nevertheless, best that your relations should *think* you there; for then they will absolutely despair of finding you. If you write, be pleased to direct, to be left for you, at Mr. Osgood's, near Soho Square. Mr. Osgood is a man of reputation: and this will effectually amuse them.

Amuse them, my dear!—Amuse whom?—My father!—my uncles!—But it must be so!——*All his expedients ready, you see!*

I had no objection to this: and I have written accordingly. But what answer I shall have, or whether any, that is what gives me no small anxiety.

This, however, is one consolation, that if I have an answer, and although my brother should be the writer, it cannot be more severe than the treatment I have of late received from him and my sister.

Mr. Lovelace stayed out about an hour and a half; an

then came in; impatiently sending up to me no less than four times to desire admittance. But I sent him word as often, that I was busy; and at last, that I should be so till dinner were ready. He then hastened that, as I heard him now and then, with a hearty curse upon the cook and waiters.

This is another of his perfections. I ventured afterwards to check him for his free words, as we sat at dinner.

Having heard him swear at his servant when below, whom, nevertheless, he owns to be a good one; it is a sad life, said I, these innkeepers live, Mr. Lovelace.

No; pretty well, I believe—but why, Madam, think you that fellows who eat and drink at other men's cost, or they are sorry innkeepers, should be entitled to pity?

Because of the soldiers they are obliged to quarter; who are generally, I believe, wretched profligates. Bless me! said I, how I heard one of them swear and curse, just now, at a modest, meek man, as I judge by his low voice and gentle answers!—Well do they make it a proverb—*Like a trooper!*

He bit his lip; arose; turned upon his heel; stept to the glass; and looking *confidently* abashed, if I may so say, Ay, Madam, said he, these troopers are sad swearing fellows. I think their officers should chastise them for it.

I am sure they deserve chastisement, replied I: for swearing is a most *unmanly* vice, and cursing as *poor* and *low* a one; since they proclaim the profligate's want of power, and his wickedness at the same time; for, could such a one *punish* as he *speaks*, he would be a fiend!

Charmingly observed, by my soul, Madam!—The next trooper I hear swear and curse, I'll tell him what an *unmanly* and what a *poor* wretch he is.

Mrs. Greme came to pay her *duty* to me, as Mr. Lovelace called it; and was very urgent with me to go to her lord's house; letting me know what handsome things she had heard her lord, and his two nieces, and all the family say of me; and what wishes for several months past they had put up for the honour she now hoped would soon be done them all.

This gave me some satisfaction, as it confirmed from the

mouth of a very good sort of woman all that Mr. Lovelace had told me.

Upon inquiry about a private lodging, she recommended me to a sister-in-law of hers, eight miles from thence—where I now am. And what pleased me the better was, that Mr. Lovelace (of whom I could see she was infinitely observant) obliged her, of his own motion, to accompany me in the chaise; himself riding on horseback, with his two servants, and one of Lord M.'s. And here we arrived about four o'clock.

But, as I told you in my former, the lodgings are inconvenient. Mr. Lovelace indeed found great fault with them: and told Mrs. Greme (who had said that they were not worthy of us) that they came not up even to her account of them. As the house was a mile from a town, it was not proper for him, he said, to be so far distant from me, lest anything should happen: and yet the apartments were not separate and distinct enough for me to like them, he was sure.

This must be agreeable enough from him you will believe.

Mrs. Greme and I had a good deal of talk in the chaise about him: she was very easy and free in her answers to all I asked; and has, I find, a very serious turn.

I led her on to say to the following effect; some part of it not unlike what Lord M.'s dismissed bailiff had said before; by which I find that all the servants have a like opinion of him.

'That Mr. Lovelace was a generous man: that it was 'hard to say whether the servants of her lord's family 'loved or feared him most: that her lord had a very great 'affection for him: that his two noble aunts were not less 'fond of him: that his cousins Montague were as good-'natured young ladies *as ever lived:* that Lord M. and 'Lady Sarah and Lady Betty had proposed several ladies to 'him before he made his addresses to me: and even since; 'despairing to move me and my friends in his favour.—But 'that he had no thoughts of marrying at all, she had heard 'him say, if it were not to me: that as well her lord as the 'two ladies his sisters were a good deal concerned at the

sage he received from my family: but admired my acter, and wished to have him married to me (although re not to have a shilling) in preference to any other n, from the opinion they had of the influence I should over him. That, to be sure, Mr. Lovelace was a wild eman: but wildness was a distemper which would tself. That her lord delighted in his company, when- he could get it: but that they often fell out, and his nip was always forced to submit—indeed, was half l of him, she believed; for Mr. Lovelace would do as eased. She mingled a thousand pities often, that he not up to the talents lent him—yet would have it he had fine qualities to found a reformation upon: when the happy day came, would make amends for all: f this all his friends were so assured, that they wished othing so earnestly as for his marriage.'

, indifferent as it is, is better than my brother says

people of the house here are very honest looking ious folks: Mrs. Sorlings is the gentlewoman's name. m seems well stocked, and thriving. She is a widow, o sons, men grown, who vie with each other which ake most pains in promoting the common good; and e both of them, I already see, more respectful to two young women their sisters, than my brother was to er.

lieve I must stay here longer than at first I thought ld.

ght to have mentioned, that before I set out for this I received your kind letter.* Everything is kind from a friend.

n, that after I had told you of my absolute determina- t to go away with him, you might well be surprised r first hearing that I was actually gone. The Lord e, my dear, I myself at times can hardly believe it is have been led to take so strange a step.

ve not the better opinion of Mr. Lovelace for his

* See Letter XVI. of this volume.

extravagant volubility. He is too full of professions. He says too many fine things *of* me, and *to* me. True respect true value, I think, lies not in words: words *cannot* express it: the silent awe, the humble, the doubting eye, and even the hesitating voice, better show it by much, than, as our beloved Shakspeare says,

——The rattling tongue
Of saucy and audacious eloquence.

The man indeed at times is all upon the *ecstatic;* one of his phrases. But to my shame and confusion, I must say that I know too well to what to attribute his transport. In one word, it is to his *triumph,* my dear. And to impute it to *that* perhaps equally exposes my vanity, and condemns my folly.

We have been alarmed with notions of a pursuit, founded upon a letter from his intelligencer.

How do different circumstances either sanctify or condemn the same action!—What care ought we to take not to confound the distinctions of right and wrong, when *self* comes in the question!—I condemned in Mr. Lovelace the corrupting of a servant of my father's; and now I am glad to give a kind of *indirect* approbation of that fault, by inquiring of him what he hears, by that or any other way, of the manner in which my relations took my flight. A preconcerted, forward, and artful flight, it must undoubtedly appear to them. How grievous is that to think of! yet *how,* as I *am situated,* can I put them right?

Most heavily, he says, they take it; but show not so much grief as rage. And he can hardly have patience to hear of the virulence and menaces of my brother against himself. Then a merit is made to me of his forbearance.

What a satisfaction am I robbed of, my dearest friend, when I reflect upon my inconsiderateness! Oh, that I had it still in my power to say I *suffered* wrong, rather than *did* wrong! That others were more wanting in their kindness to me than I duty (where duty is owing) to them.

Fie upon me! for *meeting the seducer!*—Let all end as

happily as it now may, I have laid up for myself *remorse for my whole life.*

What still more concerns me is, that every time I see this man, I am still at a greater loss than before what to make of him. I watch every turn of his countenance: and I think I see very deep lines in it. He looks with more meaning, I verily think, than he used to look; yet not more serious; not less gay—I don't know how he looks—but with more confidence a great deal than formerly; and yet he never wanted that.

But here is the thing; I behold him with *fear* now, as conscious of the power my indiscretion has given him over me. And well may *he* look more elate, when he sees me deprived of all the self-supposed significance which adorns and exalts a person who has been accustomed to respect; and who now, by a *conscious inferiority,* allows herself *to be overcome,* and in a state of *obligation,* as I may say, to a man who from a humble suitor to her for her favour, assumes the consequence and airs of a protector.

I shall send this, as my former, by a poor man who travels every day with pedlary matters. He will leave it at Mrs. Knollys's, as you direct.

If you hear anything of my father and mother, and of their health, and how my friends were affected by my unhappy step, pray be so good as to write me a few lines by the messenger, if his waiting for them can be known to you.

I am afraid to ask you, whether, upon reading that part of my narrative already in your hands, you think any sort of extenuation lies for

Your unhappy

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

LETTER XXII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Tuesday, Wednesday, April 11, 12.

You claim my promise that I will be as particular as possible, in all that passes between me and my goddess. Indeed I never had a more illustrious subject to exercise my pen. And, moreover, I have leisure; for by her good will, my access would be as difficult to her, as that of the humblest slave to an Eastern monarch. Nothing, then, but inclination to write can be wanting; and since our friendship, and your obliging attendance upon me at the White Hart, will not excuse that, I will endeavour to keep my word.

I parted with thee and thy brethren, with a full resolution, thou knowest, to rejoin ye, if she once again disappointed me, in order to go together (attended by our servants, for show sake) to the gloomy father; and demand audience of the tyrant upon the freedoms taken with my character. In short, to have tried by fair means, if fair would do, to make him change his resolutions, and treat his charming *daughter* with less inhumanity, and *me* with more civility.

I told thee my reasons for not going in search of a letter of countermand. I was right; for if I had, I should have found such a one; and had I received it, she would not have met me. Did she think, that after I had been more than once disappointed, I would not keep her to her promise; that I would not hold her to it, when I had got her in so deeply?

The moment I heard the door unbolt, I was sure of her. That motion made my heart bound to my throat. But when that was followed with the presence of my charmer, flashing upon me all at once in a flood of brightness, sweetly dressed, though all unprepared for a journey, I trod air, and hardly thought myself a mortal.

Thou shalt judge of her dress, as at the moment I first beheld her she appeared to me, and as, upon a nearer observation, she really was. I am a critic, thou knowest, in women's dresses. Many a one have I taught to dress, and helped to undress. But there is such a native elegance in this lady, that she surpasses all that I could imagine surpassing. But then her person adorns what she wears, more than dress can adorn her; and that's her excellence.

Expect therefore a faint sketch of her admirable person with her dress.

Her wax-like flesh (for after all, flesh and blood I think she is) by its delicacy and firmness, answers for the soundness of her health. Thou hast often heard me launch out in praise of her complexion. I never in my life beheld a skin so *illustriously* fair. The lily and the driven snow it is nonsense to talk of: her lawn and her laces one might indeed compare to those; but what a whited wall would a woman appear to be, who had a complexion which would justify such unnatural comparisons? But this lady is all glowing, all charming flesh and blood; yet so clear, that every meandering vein is to be seen in all the lovely parts of her which custom permits to be visible.

Thou hast heard me also describe the wavy ringlets of her shining hair, needing neither art nor powder; of itself an ornament, defying all other ornaments; wantoning in and about a neck that is beautiful beyond description.

Her head-dress was a Brussels lace mob, peculiarly adapted to the charming air and turn of her features. A sky-blue ribband illustrated that. But although the weather was somewhat sharp, she had not on either hat or hood; for, besides that she loves to use herself hardily (by which means and by a temperance truly exemplary, she is allowed to have given high health and vigour to an originally tender constitution), she seems to have intended to show me that she was determined not to stand to her appointment. O Jack! that such a sweet girl should be a rogue!

Her morning gown was a pale primrose-coloured paduasoy: the cuffs and robins curiously embroidered by the

fingers of this ever-charming Arachne, in a running pattern of violets and their leaves, the light in the flowers silver, gold in the leaves. A pair of diamond snaps in her ears. A white handkerchief wrought by the same inimitable fingers concealed—O Belford! what still more inimitable beauties did it not conceal!—And I saw, all the way we rode, the bounding heart (by its throbbing motions I saw it) dancing beneath the charming umbrage.

Her ruffles were the same as her mob. Her apron a flowered lawn. Her coat white satin, quilted: blue satin her shoes, braided with the same colour, without lace; for what need has the prettiest foot in the world of ornament? neat buckles in them: and on her charming arms a pair of black velvet glove-like muffs of her own invention; for she makes and gives fashions as she pleases.—Her hands velvet of themselves, thus uncovered the freer to be grasped by those of her adorer.

I have told thee what were *my* transports, when the undrawn bolt presented to me my long expected goddess. *Her* emotions were more sweetly feminine, after the first moments; for then the fire of her starry eyes began to sink into a less dazzling languor. She trembled: nor knew she how to support the agitations of a heart she had never found so ungovernable. She was even fainting, when I clasped her in my supporting arms. What a precious moment that! How near, how sweetly near, the throbbing partners!

By her dress, I saw, as I observed before, how unprepared she was for the journey; and not doubting her intention once more to disappoint me, I would have drawn her after me. Then began a contention the most vehement that ever I had with woman. It would pain thy friendly heart to be told the infinite trouble I had with her. I begged, I prayed; on my knees, yet in vain, I begged and prayed her to answer her own appointment: and had I not happily provided for such a struggle, knowing whom I had to deal with, I had certainly failed in my design; and as certainly would have accompanied her in, without thee and thy brethren: and who knows what might have been the consequence?

But my honest agent answering my signal, *though not quite so soon as I expected*, in the manner thou knowest I had prescribed, They are coming! They are coming!—Fly, fly, my beloved creature, cried I, drawing my sword with a flourish, as if I would have slain half a hundred of the supposed intruders; and seizing her trembling hands, I drew her after me so swiftly, that *my* feet, winged by love, could hardly keep pace with *her* feet, agitated by fear.—And so I became her emperor.

I'll tell thee all when I see thee: and thou shalt then judge of *my* difficulties, and of *her* perverseness. And thou wilt rejoice with me at my conquest over such a watchful and open-eyed charmer.

But seest thou not now (as I think I do) the wind outstripping fair one flying *from* her love *to* her love? Is there not such a game?—Nay, flying from friends she was resolved not to abandon, to the man she was determined not to go off with?—*The sex! the sex, all over!*—Charming contradiction!—Hah, hah, hah, hah!—I must here—I must here lay down my pen, to hold my sides; for I must have my laugh out now the fit is upon me.

I BELIEVE—I believe—Hah, hah, hah! I believe, Jack, my dogs conclude me mad: for here has one of them popt in, as if to see what ailed me, or whom I had with me. The whorson caught the laugh, as he went out. Hah, hah, hah! An *impudent* dog! O Jack, knewest thou my conceit, and were but thy laugh joined to mine, I believe it would hold me for an hour longer.

But oh, my best beloved fair one, repine not thou at the arts by which thou suspectest thy fruitless vigilance has been overwatched. Take care that thou provokest not new ones, that may be still more worthy of thee. If once thy emperor decrees thy fall, thou shalt greatly fall. Thou shalt have cause, if that come to pass, which *may* come to pass (for why wouldst thou put off marriage to so long a day, as till thou hadst reason to be convinced of my reformation, dearest?) thou shalt have cause, never fear, to sit down

more dissatisfied with the stars than with thyself. And come the worst to the worst, glorious terms will I give thee. Thy garrison, with general *Prudence* at the head, and governor *Watchfulness* bringing up the rear, shall be allowed to march out with all the honours due to so brave a resistance. And all thy sex, and all mine, that hear of my stratagems, and of thy conduct, shall acknowledge the fortress as nobly won as defended.

'Thou wilt not dare, methinks I hear thee say, to attempt 'to reduce such a goddess as this, to a standard unworthy 'of her excellences. It is impossible, Lovelace, that thou 'shouldst intend to break through oaths and protestations 'so solemn.'

That I did *not* intend it, is certain. That I *do* intend it, I cannot (my heart, my reverence for her, will not let me) say. But knowest thou not my aversion to the state of shackles?—And is she not IN MY POWER?

'And wilt thou, Lovelace, abuse that power which'——

Which what, Belford? Which I obtained not by her own consent, but *against* it.

'But which thou never hadst obtained, had she not 'esteemed thee above all men.'

And which I had never taken so much pains to obtain, had I not loved her above all women. So far upon a par, Jack! and if thou pleadest honour, ought not honour to be mutual? If mutual, does it not imply mutual trust, mutual confidence? And what have I had of *that* from her to boast of?—Thou knowest the whole progress of our warfare: for a warfare it has truly been; and far, very far, from an amorous warfare too. Doubts, mistrust, upbraidings, on her part; humiliations the most abject, on mine. Obliged to assume such airs of reformation, that every varlet of ye has been afraid I should reclaim in good earnest. And hast thou not thyself frequently observed to me, how awkwardly I returned to my usual gaiety, after I had been within a mile of her father's garden wall, although I had not seen her?

Does she not deserve to pay for all this?—To make an

honest fellow look like a hypocrite, what a vile thing is that!

Then thou knowest what a *false* little rogue she has been. How little conscience she has made of disappointing me. Hast thou not been a witness of my ravings on this score? Have I not, in the height of them, vowed revenge upon the faithless charmer? And if I *must* be forsworn, whether I answer her expectations, or follow my own inclinations; and if the option be in my own power, can I hesitate a moment which to choose?

Then, I fancy by her circumspection, and her continual grief, that she *expects* some mischief from me. I don't care to disappoint anybody I have a value for.

But oh the noble, the exalted creature! Who can avoid hesitating when he thinks of an offence against her? Who can but pity—

Yet, on the other hand, so loth at last to venture, though threatened to be forced into the nuptial fetters with a man, whom to look upon as a rival is to disgrace myself!—So sullen, now she has ventured!—What title has she to pity; and to a pity which her pride would make her disclaim?

But I resolve not *any way*. I will see how *her* will works; and how *my* will leads me on. I will give the combatants fair play, and yet, every time I attend her, I find that she is less in *my* power; I more in *hers*.

Yet, a foolish little rogue! to forbid me to think of marriage till I am a reformed man! Till the implacables of her family change their natures, and become placable!

It is true, when she was for making those conditions, she did not think, that without *any*, she should *be cheated out of herself*; for so the dear soul, as I may tell thee in its place, phrases it.

How it swells my pride, to have been able to outwit such a vigilant charmer! I am taller by half a yard in my imagination than I was. I look *down* upon everybody now. Last night I was still more extravagant. I took off my hat, as I walked, to see if the lace were not scorched, supposing it had brushed down a star; and before I put it

on again, in mere wantonness and heart's ease, I was l buffeting the moon.

In short, my whole soul is joy. When I go to bed laugh myself asleep; and I awake either laughing or sir ing—yet nothing nearly in view, neither—For why?– *am not yet reformed enough!*

I told thee at the time, if thou rememberest, how capal this restriction was of being turned upon the over-scrupulo dear creature, could I once get her out of her father's hous and were I disposed to punish her for her family's fault and for the infinite trouble she herself had given me. Litt thinks she *that I have kept an account of both:* and tha when my heart is soft, and all her own, I can but turn t my *memoranda,* and harden myself at once.

Oh, my charmer, look to it! Abate of thy haughty air Value not thyself upon thy sincerity, if thou *art* indifferer to me! I will not bear it *now.* *Art thou not in my* POWEI —Nor, if thou lovest me, think that the female affectatio of denying thy love, will avail thee *now,* with a heart s proud and so jealous as mine?—Remember, moreover, th all thy family sins are upon thy head!

But ah! Jack, when I see my angel, when I am admitte to the presence of this radiant beauty, what will become all this vapouring?

But be my end what it may, I am obliged, by thy pen tration, fair one, to proceed by the sap. *Fair and soft A wife at any time!* Marriage will be always in my powe

When put to the university, the same course of *init studies* will qualify the yonker for the one line or for t other. The *genius* ought to point out the future lawy divine, or physician!—So the same cautious conduct, w such a vigilance, will do either for the *wife,* or for the wife. When I reform, I'll marry. 'Tis time enough the *one,* the *lady* must say—for the *other,* say *I!*

But how I ramble!—This it is to be in such a situati that I know not what to resolve upon.

I'll tell thee my *inclinings,* as I proceed. The *pros* a the *cons* I'll tell thee: but being got too far from the tra

I set out in, I will close here. I may, however, write every day something, and send it as opportunity offers.

Regardless, nevertheless, I shall be in all I write, of connection, accuracy, or of anything but of my own imperial will and pleasure.

—o—

LETTER XXIII.

Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

Wednesday Night, April 12.

I HAVE your narrative, my dear. You are the same noble creature you ever were. Above disguise, above art, above attempting to extenuate a failing.

The only family in the world, yours, surely, that could have driven such a daughter upon such extremities.

But you must not be so very much too good for *them*, and for the *case*.

You lay the blame so properly and so unsparingly *upon your meeting him*, that nothing can be added to that subject by your worst enemies, were they to see what you have written.

I am not surprised, now I have read your narrative, that so bold and so contriving a man—I am forced to break off——

You stood it out much better and longer—here again comes my bustling, jealous mother!

DON'T be so angry at yourself. Did you not do for the best at the time? As to your first fault, *the answering his letters;* it was always incumbent upon you to assume the guardianship of such a family, when the bravo of it had run riot, as he did, and brought himself into danger.

Except your mother, who has no will of her own, have any of them common sense?

Forgive me, my dear—here is that stupid uncle Antony

of yours. A pragmatical, conceited positive.—He came yesterday, in a fearful pucker, and puffed, and blowed, and stumped about our hall and parlour, while his message was carried up.

My mother was dressing. These widows are as starched as the old bachelors. She would not see him in a dishabille for the world—*What can she mean by it?*

His errand was to set her against you, and to show their determined rage on your going away. The issue proved too evidently that this was the principal end of his visit.

The odd creature desired to speak with her alone. I am not used to such exceptions whenever any visits are made to my mother.

When she was *primmed out*, down she came to him. They locked themselves in. The two positive heads were put together—close together, I suppose; for I listened, but could hear nothing distinctly, though they both seemed full of their subject.

I had a good mind, once or twice, to have made them open the door. Could I have been sure of keeping but tolerably my temper, I would have *demanded* admittance. But I was afraid, if I had obtained it, that I should have forgot it was my mother's house, and been for turning him out of it. To come to rave against and abuse my dearest, dearest, faultless friend! and the ravings to be encouraged, and perhaps joined in, in order to justify themselves; the one for contributing to drive that dear friend out of her father's house; the other for refusing her a temporary asylum, till the reconciliation could have been effected, which her dutiful heart was set upon; and which it would have become the love which my mother had ever pretended for you, to have mediated for—Could I have had patience!

The *issue*, as I said, showed what the errand was.—Its fusty appearance, after the old fusty fellow was marched off [*you must excuse me, my dear*], was in a kind of gloomy Harlowe-like reservedness in my mother; which upon a few resenting flirts of mine, was followed by a rigorous prohibition of correspondence.

This put us, you may suppose, upon terms not the most reeable. I desired to know if I were prohibited *dreaming* you?—For, my dear, you have all my sleeping as well waking hours.

can easily allow for your correspondence with your tch at first (and yet your notions were excellent), by the :t this prohibition has upon me; since, if possible, it made me love you better than before; and I am more rous than ever of corresponding with you.

ut I have nevertheless a much more laudable motive should think myself the unworthiest of creatures, could brought to slight a dear friend, and such a meritorious in her distress. I would die first—and so I told my her. And I have desired her not to watch me in my ed hours; nor to insist upon my lying with her con- tly, which she now does more earnestly than ever. ere better, I told her, that the Harlowe-Betty were owed to be set over me.

Ir. Hickman, who greatly honours you, has, unknown to interposed so warmly in your favour with my mother, : it makes for him no small merit with me.

cannot, at present, write to every particular, unless I ld be in *set* defiance. Tease, tease, tease, for ever! : same thing, though answered fifty times over, in y hour to be repeated—Lord bless me! what a life it my poor father—but let me remember to whom I writing.

f this ever-active, ever-mischievous monkey of a man, Lovelace, contrived as you suspect—But here comes mother again—Ay, stay a little longer, my mamma, ou please—I can but be suspected! I can but be chid- for making you wait; and chidden I am sure to be, ther I do or not, in the way you, my good mamma, *Antony'd* into.

less me! how impatient she is! How she thunders at door! This moment, Madam! How came I to double- myself in! What have I done with the key! Deuce the key! Dear Madam! You flutter one so!

You may believe, my dear, that I took care of my papers before I opened the door. We have had a charming dialogue—she flung from me in a passion—

So—what's now to be done? Sent for down in a very peremptory manner, I assure you. What an incoherent letter will you have, when I can get it to you! But now I know where to send it, Mr. Hickman shall find me a messenger. Yet, if he be detected, poor soul, he will be *Harlowed-off*, as well as his *meek mistress*.

—o—

Thursday, April 13.

I HAVE this moment your continuation letter. And am favoured, at present, with the absence of my Argus-eyed mother.—

Dear creature! I can account for all your difficulties. A young lady of your delicacy!—And with such a man! —I must be brief——

The man's a fool, my dear, with all his pride, and with all his complaisance, *and affected regards to your injunctions*. Yet his ready inventions——

Sometimes I think you should go to Lady Betty's. I know not what to advise you to do.—I *should*, if you were not so intent upon reconciling yourself to your relations. Yet they are implacable. You can have no hopes of them. Your uncle's errand to my mother may convince you of that; and if you have an answer to your letter to your sister, that will confirm you, I daresay.

You need not to have been afraid of asking me, Whether upon reading your narrative, I thought any extenuation could lie for what you have done! I have, as above, before I had your question, told you my mind as to that. And repeat, that I think your *provocations and inducements* considered, you are free from blame: at least, the freest that ever young creature was who took such a step.

But *you took it not*—you were *driven on one side*, and possibly *tricked on the other*.—If any woman on earth shall be circumstanced as you were, and shall hold out so long

as you did, against her persecutors on one hand, and her seducer on the other, I will forgive her for all the rest of her conduct, be it what it will.

All your acquaintance, you may suppose, talk of nobody but you. Some indeed bring your admirable character for a plea against you: but nobody does, or *can*, acquit your father and uncles.

Everybody seems apprised of your brother's and sister's motives. Your flight is, no doubt, the very thing they aimed to drive you to, by the various attacks they made upon you; unhoping (as they must do all the time) the success of their schemes in Solmes's behalf. They knew that if once you were restored to favour, the suspended love of your father and uncles, like a river breaking down a temporary obstruction, would return with double force; and that then you would expose and triumph over all their arts.—And now, I hear they *enjoy* their successful malice.

Your father is all rage and violence. He ought, I am sure, to turn his rage inward. All your family accuse you of acting with *deep art;* and are put upon supposing that you are actually *every hour exulting over them,* with your man, in the success of it.

They all pretend now, that your trial of Wednesday was to be the last.

Advantage would indeed, my mother owns, have been taken of your yielding, if you had yielded. But had you not been to be prevailed upon, they would have given up their scheme, and taken your promise for renouncing Lovelace—Believe them who will!

They own, however, that a minister was to be present—Mr. Solmes was to be at hand—and your father was previously to try his authority over you, in order to make you sign the settlements—All of it a romantic contrivance of your wild-headed foolish brother, I make no doubt. Is it likely that he and Bell would have given way to your restoration to favour, supposing it in their power to hinder it, on any other terms than those their hearts had been so long set upon?

How they took your flight, when they found it out, ma be better supposed than described.

Your aunt Hervey, it seems, was the first that wen down to the ivy summer-house, in order to acquaint yo that their search was over. Betty followed her; and the not finding you there, went on towards the cascade, accord ing to a hint of yours.

Returning by the garden-door, they met a servant [*they don't say it was that Joseph Leman; but it is very likely that it was he*] running, as he said, from pursuing Mr. Love lace (a great hedge-stake in his hand, and out of breath) to alarm the family.

If it were this fellow, and if he were employed in the double agency of cheating them, and cheating you, what shall we think of the wretch you are with? Run away from him, my dear, if so—no matter to whom—or marry him, if you cannot.

Your aunt and all your family were accordingly alarmed by this fellow—*evidently when too late for pursuit.* They got together, and when a *posse*, ran to the place of inter view; and some of them as far as to the tracks of the chariot wheels, without stopping. And having heard the man's tale upon the spot, a general lamentation, a mutua upbraiding, and rage, and grief, were echoed from the dif ferent persons, according to their different tempers an conceptions. And they returned like fools as they went.

Your brother, at first, ordered horses and armed men t be got ready for a pursuit. Solmes and your Uncle *Tom* were to be of the party. But your mother and your aun Hervey dissuaded them from it, for fear of adding evil t evil; not doubting but Lovelace had taken measures to sup port himself in what he had done; and especially when th servant declared that he saw you run with him as fast as yo could set foot to the ground; and that there were seven armed men on horseback at a small distance off.

My mother's absence was owing to her suspicion tha the Knollys's were to assist in our correspondence. Sh

made them a visit upon it. *She does everything at once.* And they have promised that no more letters shall be left there without her knowledge.

But Mr. Hickman has engaged one Filmer, a husbandman in the lane we call Finch Lane, near us, to receive them. Thither you will be pleased to direct yours, under cover, to Mr. John Soberton; and Mr. Hickman himself will call for them there; and there shall leave mine. It goes against me too, to make him so useful to me. He looks already so proud upon it! I shall have him [who knows?] give himself airs—He had best consider that the favour he has been long aiming at, may put him into a very dangerous, a very ticklish situation. He that can oblige, may disoblige—happy for some people not to have it in their power to offend.

I will have patience, if I can, for a while, to see if these bustlings in my mother will subside—but upon my word, I will not long bear this usage.

Sometimes I am ready to think that my mother carries it thus on purpose to tire me out, and to make me the sooner marry. If I find it to be so, and that Hickman, in order to make a merit with me, is in the low plot, I will never bear him in my sight.

Plotting wretch, as I doubt your man is, I wish to heaven that you were married, that you might brave them all, and not be forced to hide yourself, and be hurried from one inconvenient place to another. I charge you, omit not to lay hold on any handsome opportunity that may offer for that purpose.

Here again comes my mother—

.

We look mighty glum upon each other, I can tell you. She had not best *Harlowe* me at this rate—I won't bear it.

I have a vast deal to write. I know not what to write first. Yet my mind is full, and ready to run over.

I am got into a private corner of the garden, to be out of her way.—Lord help these mothers!—Do they think they can prevent a daughter's writing, or doing anything she has a mind to do, by suspicion, watchfulness, and scold-

ing?—They had better place a confidence in one by half-
A generous mind scorns to abuse a generous confidence.

You have a nice, a very nice part to act with this wretc
—who yet has, I think, but one plain path before him.
pity you—but you must make the best of the lot you hav
been forced to draw. Yet I see your difficulties.—But
if he do not offer to abuse your confidence, I would hav
you *seem* at least to place some in him.

If you think not of marrying soon, I approve of you
resolution to fix somewhere out of his reach. And if h
know not where to find you, so much the better. Yet I
verily believe they would force you back, could they bu
come at you, if they were not afraid of *him*.

I think, by all means, you should demand of both you
trustees to be put in possession of your own estate. Mean
time I have sixty guineas at your service. I beg you wil
command them. Before they are gone, I'll take care yo
shall be further supplied. I don't think you'll have a shillin
or a shilling's worth of your own from your relations, unles
you extort it from them.

As they believe you went away by your own consent
they are, it seems, equally surprised and glad that yo
have left your jewels and money behind you, and hav
contrived for clothes so ill. Very little likelihood this show
of their answering your requests.

Indeed every one who knows not what I *now* know, mus
be at a loss to account for your *flight*, as they will call i
And how, my dear, can one report it with any tolerab
advantage to you?—To say you *did not intend it* when yo
met him, who will believe it?—To say that a person of yo
known steadiness and punctilio was *over-persuaded* wh
you gave him the meeting, how will that sound?—To s
you were *tricked out of yourself*, and people were to gi
credit to it, how disreputable!—And while *unmarried*, a
yet with him, the man a man of such a character, wh
would it not lead a censuring world to think?

I want to see how you put it in your letter for yo
clothes.

As you may depend upon all the little spiteful things they can offer, instead of sending what you write for, pray accept the sum I tender. What will seven guineas do?—And I will find a way to send you also any of my clothes and linen for present supply. I beg, my dear Clarissa, that you will not put your Anna Howe upon a footing with Lovelace, in refusing to accept of my offer. If you do not oblige me, I shall be apt to think that you rather incline to be obliged to *him*, than to favour *me*. And if I find this, I shall not know how to reconcile it with your delicacy in other respects.

Pray inform me of everything that passes between you and him. My cares for you (however needless, from your own prudence) make me wish you to continue to be very minute. If anything occur that you would tell me of if I were present, fail not to put it down in writing, although from your natural diffidence, it should not appear to you altogether so worthy of your pen, or of my knowing. A stander-by may see more of the game than one that plays. Great consequences, like great folks, generally owe their greatness to small causes, and little incidents.

Upon the whole, I do not now think it is in your power to dismiss him when you please. I apprised you beforehand that it would not. I repeat, therefore, that were I you, I would at least *seem* to place some confidence in him. So long as he is decent, you may. Very visibly observable, to such delicacy as yours, must be that behaviour in him, which will make him unworthy of *some* confidence.

Your relations, according to what old Antony says to *my mother*, and *she to me* (by way of threatening that you will not gain your supposed ends upon them by your flight), seem to expect that you will throw yourself into Lady Betty's protection; and that she will offer to mediate for you. And they vow that they will never hearken to any terms of accommodation that shall come from that quarter. They might speak out, and say from *any* quarter; for I dare aver that your brother and sister will not let them cool—at least, till their uncles have made such dispositions,

and perhaps your father too, as they would have them make.

As this letter will apprise you of an alteration in the place to which you must direct your next, I send it by a friend of Mr. Hickman, who may be depended upon. He has business in the neighbourhood of Mrs. Sorlings; and he knows her. He will return to Mr. Hickman this night; and bring back any letter you shall have ready to send, or can get ready. It is moonlight. He'll not mind waiting for you. I choose not to send by any of Mr. Hickman's servants—at present, however. Every hour is now, or may be, important; and may make an alteration in your resolutions necessary.

I hear at this instant, my mother calling about her, and putting everybody into motion. She will soon, I suppose, make *me* and *my* employment the subjects of her inquiry.

Adieu, my dear. May Heaven preserve you, and restore you with honour as unsullied as your mind to

Your ever affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XXIV.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Thursday Afternoon, April 13.

I AM infinitely concerned, my ever dear and ever kind friend, that I am the sad occasion of the displeasure between your mother and you.—How many persons have I made unhappy.

Had I not to console myself that my error is not owing to wicked precipitation, I should be the most miserable of all creatures. As it is, I am enough punished in the *loss of my character*, more valuable to me than my life; and in the *cruel doubts and perplexities* which, conflicting with my hopes, and each getting the victory by turns, harrow up my soul between them.

I think, however, that you should obey your mother, and decline a correspondence with me; at least for the present. Take care how you fall into my error; for that *begun with carrying on a prohibited correspondence;* a correspondence which I thought it in my power to discontinue at pleasure. My talent is scribbling; and I the readier fell into this freedom, as I found delight in writing; having motives, too, which I thought laudable; and at one time, the permission of all my friends; to write to him.*

Yet, as to this correspondence, what hurt could arise from it, if your mother could be prevailed upon to permit it to be continued?—So much prudence and discretion as you have; and you, in writing to me, lying under no temptation of following so bad an example as I have set—my letters too occasionally filled with self-accusation.

I thank you, my dear, most cordially I thank you, for your kind offers. You may be assured that I will sooner be beholden to you than to anybody living. To Mr. Lovelace the last. Do not therefore think, that by declining your favours, I have an intention to lay myself under obligations to him.

I am willing to hope (notwithstanding what you write) that my friends will send me my little money, together with my clothes. They are too considerate, some of them, at least, to permit that I should be put to such *low* difficulties. Perhaps they will not be in haste to oblige me. But if not, I cannot yet want. I believe you think I must not dispute with Mr. Lovelace the expenses of the road and lodgings, till I can get a fixed abode. But I hope soon to put an end even to those sort of obligations.

Small hopes indeed of a reconciliation from your account of my uncle's visit to your mother, in order to set her against an almost friendless creature whom once he loved! *But is it not my duty to try for it?* Ought I to widen my error by obstinacy and resentment, because of their resentment; which must appear reasonable to them, as they suppose my flight premeditated; and as they are made to believe, that

* See vol. i. Letter III.

I am capable of triumphing *in it*, and *over them*, with the *man they hate?* When I have done all in my power to restore myself to their favour, I shall have the less to reproach myself with.

These considerations make me waver about following your advice, in relation to marriage; and the rather, as he is so full of complaisance with regard to my former conditions, which he calls my *injunctions*. Nor can I, now that my friends, as you inform me, have so strenuously declared *against accepting of the mediation of the ladies of Mr. Lovelace's family*, put myself into their protection, unless I am resolved to give up all hopes of a reconciliation with my own.

Yet if any happy introduction *could* be thought of to effect this desirable purpose, how shall terms be proposed to my father, while this man is with me, or near me? On the other hand, should they in his absence get me back by force (and this, you are of opinion they would attempt to do, but in fear of him), how will their severest acts of compulsion be justified by my flight from them!—Meanwhile, to what censures, as you remind me, do I expose myself while he and I are together and unmarried!—Yet [can I with patience ask the question?] *Is it in my power?*—Oh, my dear Miss Howe! And am I so reduced, as that, to save the poor remains of my reputation in the world's eye, I must *watch the gracious motion* from this man's lips?

Were my cousin Morden in England, all might still perhaps be determined happily.

If no other mediation than this can be procured to set on foot the wished-for reconciliation, and if my situation with Mr. Lovelace alter not in the interim, I must endeavour to keep myself in a state of independence till he arrive, that I may be at liberty to govern myself by his advice and direction.

I will acquaint you, as you desire, with all that passes between Mr. Lovelace and me. Hitherto I have not discovered anything in his behaviour that is *very* exceptionable. Yet I cannot say that I think the respect he shows me, as

restrained, and natural respect, although I can hardly
re the fault is.
ıe has doubtless an arrogant and encroaching spirit.
ıe so polite as his education, and other advantages,
ave made one expect him to be. He seems, in short,
ıe who has always had too much of his own will to
accommodate himself to that of others.
the placing of some confidence in him, I shall be as
take your advice in this particular, as in all others,
ıe will be to deserve it. But *tricked away* as I was
not only *against my judgment, but my inclination,*
or *anybody,* expect that I should immediately treat
h complaisance as if I acknowledged obligation to
carrying me away?—If I did, must he not either
e a vile dissembler *before* he gained that point, or
rds?
d, indeed, my dear, I could tear my hair, on re-
ing what you write (as to the probability that the
Wednesday was more dreaded than it needed to be),
: that I should be thus tricked by this man; and
all likelihood, through his vile agent Joseph Leman.
ıeditated and elaborate a wickedness as it must be!
I not, *with such a man,* be wanting *to myself,* if I
! jealous and vigilant? Yet what a life to live for a
open, and naturally *so unsuspicious,* as mine?
obliged to Mr. Hickman for the assistance he is so
eady to give to our correspondence. He is so *little*
o make to himself an additional merit with the
r upon it, that I shall be very sorry if he risk any-
ith the *mother* by it.
now in a state of obligation: so must rest satisfied
ıatever I cannot help. Whom have I the power,
precious to me, of obliging?—What I mean, my
that I ought, perhaps, to expect that my influences
u are weakened by my indiscretion. Nevertheless,
ot, if I can help it, *desert myself,* nor give up the
: you used to allow me, of telling you what I think
parts of your conduct as I may not approve.

You must permit me therefore, severe as your mother is against an undesigning offender, to say that I think your liveliness to her inexcusable—to pass over, for this time, what nevertheless concerns me not a little, the free treatment you almost *indiscriminately* give to my relations.

If you will not, for your *duty's sake*, forbear your tauntings and impatience, let me beseech you, that you will for *mine*.—Since otherwise, your mother may apprehend that my example, like a leaven, is working itself into the mind of her beloved daughter. And may not such an apprehension give her an irreconcileable displeasure against me?

I enclose the copy of my letter to my sister, which you are desirous to see. You will observe that although I have not demanded my estate in form, and of my trustees, yet that I have hinted at leave to retire to it. How joyfully would I keep my word, if they would accept of the offer I renew!—It was not proper I believe you will think, on many accounts, to own that I was carried off against my inclination. I am, my dearest friend,

Your ever obliged and affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

—o—

LETTER XXV.

To Miss Arabella Harlowe.

[Enclosed to Miss Howe in the preceding.]

St. Alban's, April 11.

MY DEAR SISTER,—I have, I confess, been guilty of an action which carries with it a rash and undutiful appearance. And I should have thought it an inexcusable one, had I been used with less severity than I have been of late; and had I not had too great reason to apprehend that I was to be made a sacrifice to a man I could not bear to think of. But what is done, is done—perhaps I could wish it had not; and that I had trusted to the relenting of my dear

and honoured parents.—Yet this from no other motives but those of duty to them.—To whom I am ready to return (if I may not be permitted to retire to *The Grove*) on conditions which I before offered to comply with.

Nor shall I be in any sort of dependence upon the person by whose means I have taken this *truly-reluctant step*, inconsistent with any reasonable engagement I shall enter into, if I am not further precipitated. Let me not have it to say, now at this important crisis! that I have a sister, but not a friend in that sister. My reputation, dearer to me than life (whatever you may imagine from the step I have taken), is suffering. A little lenity will, even yet, in a great measure restore it, and make that pass for a temporary misunderstanding only, which otherwise will be a stain as durable as life, upon a creature who has already been treated with great *unkindness*, to use no harsher a word.

For your own sake, therefore, for my brother's sake, by whom (I must say) I have been thus precipitated, and for all the family's sake, aggravate not my fault, if, on recollecting everything, you think it one; nor by widening the unhappy difference, expose a sister for ever—prays

Your affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

I shall take it for a very great favour to have my clothes directly sent me, together with fifty guineas, which you will find in my escritoire (of which I enclose the key); as also of the divinity and miscellany classes of my little library; and, if it be thought fit, my jewels—directed for *me*, to be left till called for, at Mr. Osgood's, near Soho Square.

—o—

LETTER XXVI.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Mr. Lovelace, in continuation of his last letter (No. XXII.), *gives an account to his friend (pretty much to the same effect with the lady's) of all that passed between them at the inns, in the journey, and till their fixing at Mrs. Sorling's; to avoid repetition, those passages in his narrative are extracted, which will serve to embellish hers; to open his views; or to display the humorous talent he was noted for.*

At their alighting at the inn at St. Alban's on Monday night, thus he writes:—

The people who came about us, as we alighted, seemed by their jaw-fallen faces, and goggling eyes, to wonder at beholding a charming young lady, majesty in her air and aspect, so composedly dressed, yet with features so discomposed, come off a journey which had made the cattle smoke, and the servants sweat. I read their curiosity in their faces, and my beloved's uneasiness in hers. She cast a conscious glance, as she alighted, upon her habit, which was no *habit* and repulsively, as I may say, quitting my assisting hand hurried into the house. . . . .

Ovid was not a greater master of metamorphoses than thy friend. To the mistress of the house I instantly change her into a sister, brought off by surprise from a near relation's (where she had wintered), to prevent her marrying confounded rake [I love always to go as near the truth as can], whom her father and mother, her elder sister, and all her loving uncles, aunts, and cousins abhorred. This accounted for my charmer's expected sullens; for her displeasure when she was to join me again, were it to hold: for her unsuitable dress upon the road; and, at the same time, gave her a proper and seasonable assurance of my honourable views.

Upon the debate between the lady and him, and particularly upon that part where she upbraids him with putting a youn

creature upon making a sacrifice of her duty and conscience, he writes:

All these, and still more mortifying things, she said.

I heard her in silence. But when it came to my turn, I pleaded, I argued, I answered her, as well as I could.—And when humility would not do, I raised my voice, and suffered my eyes to sparkle with anger; hoping to take advantage of that sweet cowardice which is so amiable in the sex, and to which my victory over this proud beauty is principally owing.

She was not intimidated, however, and was going to rise upon me in her temper; and would have broken in upon my defence. But when a man talks to a woman upon such subjects, let her be ever so much in *alt*, 'tis strange if he cannot throw out a tub to the whale;—that is to say, if he cannot divert her from resenting one bold thing, by uttering two or three full as bold; but for which more favourable interpretations will lie.

To that part, where she tells him of the difficulty she made to correspond with him at first, thus he writes:

Very true, my precious!—And innumerable have been the difficulties thou hast made me struggle with. But one day thou mayest wish that thou hadst spared this boast; as well as those other pretty haughtinesses, 'That thou didst not 'reject Solmes for *my* sake: that *my* glory, if I valued my-'self upon carrying thee off, was *thy* shame: that I have 'more merit with *myself* than with thee, or anybody else: '[*what a coxcomb she makes me, Jack*]: that thou wishest 'thyself in thy father's house again, *whatever were to be the* '*consequence.*'—If I forgive thee, charmer, for these hints, for these reflections, for these wishes, for these contempts, I am not the Lovelace I have been reputed to be; and that thy treatment of me shows that thou thinkest I am.

In short, her whole air throughout this debate expressed a majestic kind of indignation, which implied a believed superiority of talents over the person to whom she spoke

Thou hast heard me often expatiate upon the pitiful figure

a man must make, whose wife *has*, or *believes* she has, more sense than himself. A thousand reasons could I give why I ought not to think of marrying Miss Clarissa Harlowe; at least till I can be sure that she loves me with the preference I must expect from a wife.

I begin to stagger in my resolutions. Ever averse as *I* was to the hymeneal shackles, how easily will old prejudices recur! Heaven give me the heart to be honest to my Clarissa!—There's a prayer, Jack! If I should not be heard, what a sad thing would that be, for the most admirable of women!—Yet, as I do not often trouble Heaven with my prayers, who knows but this may be granted?

But there lie before me such charming difficulties, such scenery for intrigue, for stratagem, for enterprise. What a horrible thing, that my talents point all that way!—When I know what is honourable and just; and would almost wish to be honest?—*Almost*, I say; for such a varlet am I that I cannot altogether wish it, for the soul of me!—Such a triumph over the whole sex, if I can subdue this lady! My maiden vow, as I may call it!—For did not the sex begin with me? And does this lady spare me? Thinkest thou, Jack, that I should have spared my Rosebud, had I been set at defiance thus?—Her grandmother besought me, at first, to *spare her Rosebud:* and when a girl is put, or puts herself into a man's power, what can he wish for *further?* while I always considered opposition and resistance as a challenge to do my worst.*

Why, why will the dear creature take such pains to appear all ice to me?—Why will she, by *her* pride, awaken *mine?*—Hast thou not seen, in the above, how contemptibly she treats me?—What have I not suffered *for* her, and even *from* her?—Ought I to bear being told, that she will despise me, if I value myself above that odious Solmes?

Then she cuts me short in all my ardours. To *vow fidelity* is, by a cursed turn upon me, to show that there is reason, in my own opinion, for doubt of it. The very same reflection upon me once before.† In my power, or out of

* See vol. i. Letter XXXIV. † See vol. i. Letter LVII.

my power, all one to this lady.—So, Belford, my poor vows are crammed down my throat, before they can well rise to my lips. And what can a lover say to his mistress, if she will neither let him lie nor swear?

One little piece of artifice I had recourse to. When she pushed so hard for me to leave her, I made a request to her, upon a condition she could not refuse; and pretended as much gratitude upon her granting it, as if it were a favour of the last consequence.

And what was this? but to promise what she had before promised, 'Never to marry any other man, while I am 'living, and single, unless I should give her cause for high 'disgust against me.' This, you know, was promising nothing, because she could be offended at any time, and was to be the sole judge of the offence. But it showed her how reasonable and just my expectations were; and that I was no encroacher.

She consented; and asked what security I expected? Her word only.

She gave me her word: but I besought her excuse for sealing it: and in the same moment (since to have waited for consent would have been asking for a denial) saluted her. And, believe me or not, but, as I hope to live, it was the first time I had the courage to touch her charming lips with mine. And this I tell thee, Belford, that that single pressure (as modestly put, too, as if I were as much a virgin as herself, that she might not be afraid of me another time) delighted me more than ever I was delighted by the *ultimatum* with any other woman.—So precious do awe, reverence, and apprehended prohibition make a favour!

And now, Belford, I am only afraid that I shall be *too* cunning; for she does not at present talk enough for me. I hardly know what to make of the dear creature yet.

I topt the brother's part on Monday night before the landlady at St. Alban's; asking my sister's pardon for carrying her off so unprepared for a journey; prated of the joy my father and mother, and all our friends, would have in receiving her; and this with so many circum-

stances, that I perceived, by a look she gave me, th went through my very reins, that I had gone too far. apologised for it indeed when alone; but could not pen trate, for the soul of me, whether I made the matter bett or worse by it.

But I am of too frank a nature: my success, and the jo I have because of the jewel I am half in possession of, h not only unlocked my bosom, but left the door quite open

This is a confounded sly sex. Would she but speak ou as I do—but I must learn reserves of her.

She must needs be unprovided of money: but has to much pride to accept of any from me. I would have hi her go to town [*to town, if possible, must I get her to co sent to go*], in order to provide herself with the richest silks which that can afford. But neither is this to l assented to. And yet, as my intelligencer acquaints me, h implacable relations are resolved to distress her all they ca

These wretches have been most gloriously raving, ev since her flight; and still, thank Heaven, continue to rav and will, I hope, for a twelvemonth to come. Now, at la it is my day!

Bitterly do they regret that they permitted her poultr visits and garden-walks, which gave her the opportunity effect an escape which they suppose preconcerted. For, to her dining in the ivy-bower, they had a cunning desi to answer upon her in that permission, as Betty told Josep her lover.*

They lost, they say, an excellent pretence for confini her *more* closely on my threatening to rescue her, if th offered to carry her against her will to old Antony's moat house.† For this, as I told thee at the Hart, and as I on hinted to the dear creature herself,‡ they had it in delibe tion to do; apprehending that I might attempt to ca her off, either with or without her consent, on some one those connived-at excursions.

* Vol. ii. Letter XIV. paragraphs 37, 38.

† See vol. ii. Letter III. and Letter VI. par. 1.

‡ Ibid. Letter III. par. 4. See also vol. i. Letter LIX. par 3.

But here my honest Joseph, who gave me the information, was of admirable service to me. I had taught him to make the Harlowes believe that I was as communicative to *my* servants, as their stupid James was to Joseph:* Joseph, as they supposed, by tampering with Will,† got all my secrets, and was acquainted with all my motions; and having also undertaken to watch all those of his young lady,‡ the wise family were secure; and so was my beloved; and so was I.

I once had it in my head (and I hinted it to thee§ in a former) in case such a step should be necessary, to attempt to carry her off by surprise from the wood-house; as it is remote from the dwelling-house. This, had I attempted, I should certainly have effected, by the help of the confraternity: and it would have been an action worthy of us all.—But Joseph's conscience, as he called it, stood in my way; for he thought it must have been known to be done by his connivance. I could, I daresay, have overcome this scruple, *as easily as I did many of the others,* had I not depended at one time upon her meeting me at a midnight or late hour [and, if she had, she never would have gone back]; at other times, upon the cunning family's doing my work for me, equally against their knowledge or their wills.

For well I knew that James and Arabella were determined never to leave off their foolish trials and provocations, till, by tiring her out, they had either made her Solmes's wife, or guilty of some such rashness as should throw her for ever out of the favour of both her uncles; though they had too much malice in their heads to intend service to me by their persecutions of her.

* See vol. ii. Letter XIV. pars. 6. and 39.

† This will be farther explained in Letter XXXVI. of this volume.

‡ See vol. i. Letters XXXI. and XXXIV.

§ Ibid. Letter XXXV.

LETTER XXVII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

[In continuation.]

I OBLIGED the dear creature highly, I could perceive, by bringing Mrs. Greme to attend her, and to suffer that good woman's recommendation of lodgings to take place, on her refusal to go to *The Lawn*.

She must believe all my views to be honourable, when I had provided for her no particular lodgings, leaving it to her choice, whether she would go to M. Hall, to The Lawn, to London, or to either of the dowagers of my family.

She was visibly pleased with my motion of putting Mrs. Greme into the chaise with her, and riding on horseback myself.

Some people would have been apprehensive of what might pass between her and Mrs. Greme. But as all my relations either know or believe the justice of my intentions by her, I was in no pain on that account; and the less, as I have been always above hypocrisy, or wishing to be thought better than I am. And indeed, what occasion has a man to be a hypocrite, who has hitherto found his views upon the sex better answered for his being known to be a rake? Why, even my beloved here denied not to correspond with me, though her friends had taught her to think me a libertine—who then would be trying a *new* and *worse* character?

And then Mrs. Greme is a pious matron, and would not have been biassed against truth on any consideration. She used formerly, while there were any hopes of my reformation, to pray for me. She hardly continues the good custom I doubt; for her worthy lord makes no scruple occasionally to rave against me to man, woman, and child, as they come in his way. He is very undutiful, as thou knowest. Surely I may say so; since all duties are reciprocal. But for Mr Greme, *poor woman!* when my lord has the gout, and is at The Lawn, and the chaplain not to be found, she prays by

him, or reads a chapter to him in the Bible, or some other good book.

Was it not therefore right to introduce such a good sort of woman to the dear creature; and to leave them, without reserve, to their own talk!—And very busy in talk I saw they were, as they rode; and *felt* it too; for most charmingly glowed my cheeks.

I hope I shall be honest, I once more say: but as we frail mortals are not our own masters at all times, I must endeavour to keep the dear creature unapprehensive, until I can get her to *our acquaintance's in London*, or to some *other safe place there*. Should I, in the interim, give her the least room for suspicion; or offer to restrain her; she can make her appeals to strangers, and call the country in upon me; and perhaps throw herself upon her relations on their own terms. And were I now to lose her, how unworthy should I be to be the prince and leader of such a confraternity as ours!—How unable to look up among men! or to show my face among women!

As things at present stand, she dare not own that she went off against her own consent; and I have taken care to make all the *implacables* believe that she escaped *with* it.

She has received an answer from Miss Howe, to the letter written to her from St. Albans.*

Whatever are the contents, I know not; but she was drowned in tears on the perusal of it. And I am the sufferer.

Miss Howe is a charming creature too; but confoundedly smart and spiritful. I am a good deal afraid of her. Her mother can hardly keep her in. I must continue to play off *old Antony*, by my *honest Joseph*, upon that mother, in order to manage that daughter, and oblige my beloved to in absolute dependence upon myself.†

Mrs. Howe is impatient of contradiction. So is Miss. A young lady who is sensible that she has all the maternal requisites herself, to be under maternal control;—fine ground for a man of intrigue to build upon!—A mother

* See vol. ii. Letter XV. † See vol. i. Letter XXXI.

over-notable; a daughter over-sensible; and their Hickman who is—over-neither: but merely a passive—

Only that I have an object still more desirable!—

Yet how unhappy that these two young ladies lived so near each other, and are so well acquainted! Else how charmingly might I have managed them both!

But *one* man cannot have every woman worth having—Pity though—when the man is such a VERY clever fellow!

—o—

LETTER XXVIII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

[In continuation.]

NEVER was there such a pair of scribbling lovers as we; —yet perhaps whom it so much concerns to keep from each other what each writes. She *won't* have anything else to do. I *would,* if she'd let me. I am not reformed enough for a husband—*Patience is a virtue,* Lord M. says. *Slow and sure,* is another of his sentences. If I had not a great deal of that virtue, I should not have waited the Harlowes own time of ripening into execution my plots upon themselves and upon their goddess daughter.

My beloved has been writing to her saucy friend, I believe, all that has befallen her, and what has passed between us hitherto. She will possibly have fine subjects for her pen, if she be as minute as I am.

I would not be so barbarous as to permit old Antony to set Mrs. Howe against her, did I not dread the consequences of the correspondence between the two young ladies. So lively the one, so vigilant, so prudent both, who would not wish to outwit such girls, and to be able to twirl them round his finger?

My charmer has written to her sister for her clothes, for some gold, and for some of her books. What books can tell her more than she knows? But *I* can. So she had better study *me.*

She *may* write. She must be obliged to me at last, with all her pride. Miss Howe indeed will be ready enough to supply her; but I question whether she can do it without her mother, who is as covetous as the grave. And my agent's agent, old Antony, has already given the mother a hint which will make her jealous of *pecuniaries*.

Besides, if Miss Howe has money by her, I can put her mother upon borrowing it of her: nor blame me, Jack, for contrivances that have their foundation in generosity. Thou knowest my spirit; and that I should be proud to lay an obligation upon my charmer to the amount of half, nay, to the whole of my estate. Lord M. has more for me than I can ever wish for. My predominant passion is *girl*, not *gold*; nor value I *this*, but as it helps me to *that*, and gives me independence.

I was forced to put it into the sweet novice's head, as well for *my* sake as for *hers* (lest we should be traceable by *her* direction), whither to direct the sending of her clothes, if they incline to do her that small piece of justice.

If they do I shall begin to dread a reconciliation; and must be forced to muse for a contrivance or two to prevent it, and *to avoid mischief*. For that (as I have told honest Joseph Leman) is a great point with me.

Thou wilt think me a sad fellow, I doubt. But are not all rakes sad fellows?—And art not thou, to thy little power, as bad as any? If thou dost all that's in thy head and in thy heart to do, thou art worse than I; for I do not, I assure you.

I proposed, and she consented, that her clothes, or whatever else her relations should think fit to send her, should be directed to thy cousin Osgood's. Let a special messenger, at my charge, bring me any letter or portable parcel that shall come. If not portable, give me notice of it. But thou'l't have no trouble of this sort from her relations, I dare be sworn. And in this assurance I will leave them, I think, to act upon their own heads. A man would have no more to answer for than needs must.

But one thing, while I think of it; *which is of great im-*

portance to be attended to—you must hereafter write to me in character, as I shall do to you. It would be a confounded thing to be blown up by a train of my own laying. And who knows what opportunities a man in love may have against himself? In changing a coat or waistcoat, something might be forgotten. I once suffered that way. Then for the sex's curiosity, it is but remembering, in order to guard against it, that the name of their common mother was Eve.

Another thing remember; I have changed my name: changed it without an Act of Parliament. 'Robert Huntingford' it is now. Continue *Esquire.* It is a respectable addition, although every sorry fellow assumes it, almost to the banishment of the usual travelling one of *Captain.* 'To be left till called for, at the post-house at Hertford.'

Upon naming thee, she asked thy character. I gave thee a better than thou deservest, in order to do credit to *myself.* Yet I told her that thou wert an awkward fellow; and this to do credit to *thee,* that she may not, if ever she be to see thee, expect a cleverer man than she'll find. Yet thy *apparent* awkwardness befriends thee not a little: for wert thou a sightly mortal, people would discover nothing extraordinary in thee, when they conversed with thee: whereas, seeing a bear, they are surprised to find in thee anything that is like a man. Felicitate thyself then upon thy defects; which are evidently thy principal perfections; and which occasion thee a distinction which otherwise thou wouldst never have.

The lodgings we are in at present are not convenient. I was so delicate as to find fault with them, as communicating with each other, because I knew *she* would; and told her, that were I sure she was safe from pursuit, I would leave her in them (since such was her earnest desire and expectation), and go to London.

She must be an infidel against all reason and appearances, if I do not banish even the *shadow* of mistrust from her heart.

Here are two young likely girls, daughters of the widow Sorlings; that's the name of our landlady.

I have only, at present, admired them in their dairy-works. ow greedily do the sex swallow praise!—Did I not once, n the streets of London, see a well-dressed, handsome girl ugh, bridle, and visibly enjoy the praises of a sooty dog, a imney-sweeper; who, with his empty sack across his oulder, after giving her the way, stopt, and held up his ush and shovel in admiration of her?—Egad, girl, thought I despise thee as Lovelace: but were I the chimney-eeper, and could only contrive to get into thy presence, y life to thy virtue, I would have thee.

So pleased was I with the young Sorlings, for the elegance her works, that I kissed her, and she made me a courtesy r my condescension; and blushed, and seemed *sensible all er:* encouraging, yet innocently, she adjusted her hand-rchief, and looked towards the door, as much as to say, she uld not tell were I to kiss her again.

Her eldest sister popt upon her. The conscious girl shed again, and looked so confounded, that I made an use for her, which gratified both. Mrs. Betty, said I, I ve been so much pleased with the neatness of your dairy-rks, that I could not help saluting your sister: you have r share of merit in them, I am sure—give me leave—— Good souls!—I like them both—she courtesied too!—How love a grateful temper! Oh, that my Clarissa were but half acknowledging!

I think I must get one of them to attend my charmer hen she removes—the mother seems to be a notable woman. e had not best, however, be *too* notable: since, were she suspicion to give a face of difficulty to the matter, it would epare me for a trial with one or both the daughters.

Allow me a little rhodomontade, Jack—but really and ly my heart is fixed. I can think of no creature breathing the sex, but my Gloriana.

—o—

LETTER XXIX.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

[In continuation.]

THIS is Wednesday; the day that I was to have los charmer for ever to the hideous Solmes! With what satisfaction and heart's-ease can I now sit down, and triu over my men in straw at Harlowe Place! Yet 'tis pei best for them, that she got off as she did. Who knows consequences might have followed upon my attending in; or (if she had not met me) upon my projected followed by my myrmidons?

But had I even gone in with her unaccompanied, I t I had but little reason for apprehension: for well knowest that *the tame spirits* which value themselves reputation, and are held within the skirts of the law by tical considerations only, may be compared to an infec spider; which will run into his hole the moment one o threads is touched by a finger that can crush him, le: all his toils defenceless, and to be brushed down at th of the potent invader. While a silly fly, that has ne courage nor strength to resist, no sooner gives notice, l buz and its struggles, of its being entangled, but out the self-circumscribed tyrant, winds round and roun poor insect, till he covers it with his bowel-spun toils; when so fully secured that it can neither move leg nor suspends it, as if for a spectacle to be exulted over: stalking to the door of his cell, turns about, glotes over a distance; and, sometimes advancing, sometimes ret preys at leisure upon its vitals.

But now I think of it, will not this comparison do a for the *entangled girls*, as for the *tame spirits?*—Bet my conscience!—'Tis but comparing the spider to us fellows, and it *quadrates*.

Whatever our hearts are in, our heads will follow.

with *spiders*, with *flies*, with what we will, girl is the centre of gravity, and we all naturally tend to it.

Nevertheless, to recur; I cannot but observe that these *tame spirits* stand a poor chance in a fairly offensive war with such of us mad fellows as are above all law, and scorn to skulk behind the hypocritical screen of reputation.

Thou knowest that I never scruple to throw myself amongst numbers of adversaries; the more the safer: one or two, no fear, will take the part of a single adventurer, if not *intentionally*, in *fact*; holding him in, while others hold in the principal antagonist, to the augmentation of their mutual prowess, till both are prevailed upon to compromise, or one to be absent: so that, upon the whole, the law-breakers have the advantage of the law-keepers, all the world over; at least for a time, and till they have run to the end of their race. Add to this, in the question between me and the Harlowes, that the whole family of them must know that they have injured me—must therefore be afraid of me. Did they not, at their own church, cluster together like bees when they saw me enter it? Nor knew they which should venture out first when the service was over.

James, indeed, was not there. If he had, he would perhaps have endeavoured to *look* valiant. But there is a sort of valour in the *face*, which shows fear in the *heart*: just such a face would James Harlowe's have been, had I made them a visit.

When I have had such a face and such a heart as I have described to deal with, I have been all calm and serene, and left it to the friends of the blusterer (as I have done to the Harlowes) to do my work for me.

I am about mustering up in my memory, all that I have ever done that has been thought praiseworthy, or but barely tolerable. I am afraid thou canst not help me to many remembrances of this sort; because I never was so bad as since I have known thee.

Have I not had it in my heart to do *some* good that thou canst remind me off? Study for me, Jack. I have recollected some instances which I think will *tell in*—but see if hou canst not help me to some which I may have forgot.

This I may venture to say, that the principal blot in my escutcheon is owing to these girls, these confounded girls. But for *them*, I could go to church with a good conscience: but when I do, there they are. Everywhere does Satan spread his snares for me! But, now I think of it, what if our governor should appoint churches for the *women* only, and others for the *men*?—Full as proper, I think, for the promoting of *true piety* in both [much better than the synagogue-lattices], as separate boarding-schools for their *education*.

There are already male and female dedications of churches. St. Swithin's, St. Stephen's, St. Thomas's, St. George's, and so forth, might be appropriated to the men; and Santa Catharina's, Santa Anna's, Santa Maria's, Santa Margaretta's, for the women.

Yet were it so, and life to be the forfeiture of being found at the female churches, I believe that I, like a second Clodius, should change my dress, to come at my Portia or Pompeia, though one the daughter of a Cato, the other the wife of a Cæsar.

But how I *excurse!*—Yet thou usedst to say thou likedst my excursions. If thou dost, thou'lt have enow of them: for I never had a subject I so much adored; and with which I shall probably be compelled to have so much patience before I strike the blow; if the blow I do strike.

But let me call myself back to my *recordation*-subject—Thou needest not remind me of my *Rosebud*. I have her in my head; and moreover have contrived to give my fair one a hint of that affair, by the agency of honest Joseph Leman;* although I have not reaped the hoped-for credit of her acknowledgment.

That's the devil; and it was always my hard fate—everything I do that is good, is but as I *ought!*—Everything of a contrary nature is brought into the most glaring light against me—Is this fair? Ought not a balance to be struck; and the credit carried to my account?—Yet I must own too, that I half grudge Johnny this blooming maiden?

* See vol. i. Letter LXXI.

r, in truth, I think a fine woman too rich a jewel to hang out a poor man's neck.

Surely, Jack, if I am guilty of a fault in my universal ɔrations of the sex, the *women* in general ought to love the better for it.

And so they do, I thank them heartily; except here and re a covetous little rogue comes across me, who, under the tence of loving virtue for its own sake, wants to have all to herself.

I have rambled enough.

Adieu, for the present.

—o—

LETTER XXX.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Thursday Night, April 13.

I ALWAYS loved writing, and my unhappy situation gives now enough of it; and you, I fear, too much. I have d another very warm debate with Mr. Lovelace. It ought on the subject which you advised me not to decline, ien it handsomely offered. And I want to have either ur acquittal or blame for having suffered it to go off thout effect.

The impatient wretch sent up to me several times, while vas writing my last to you, to desire my company: yet business nothing particular; only to hear *him* talk. The n seems pleased with his own volubility; and whenever has collected together abundance of smooth things, he nts me to find an ear for them! Yet he need not; for I 't often gratify him either with giving him the praise for verboseness, or showing the pleasure in it that he would fond of.

When I had finished the letter, and given it to Mr. kman's friend, I was going up again, and had got up f a dozen stairs; when he besought me to stop, and r what he had to say.

Nothing, as I said, to any new purpose had he to offer, but complainings; and those in a manner, and with an air, as I thought, that bordered upon insolence. He could not live, he told me, unless he had more of my company, and of my *indulgence* too, than I had yet given him.

Hereupon I stept down, and into the parlour, not a little out of humour with him; and the more, as he has very *quietly taken up his quarters here*, without talking of removing, as he had promised.

We began instantly our angry conference. He provoked me; and I repeated several of the plainest things I had said in our former conversations; and particularly told him, that I was every hour more and more dissatisfied with myself, and with him: that he was not a man who, in my opinion, improved upon acquaintance: and that I should not be *easy till he had left me to myself.*

He might be surprised at my warmth, perhaps: but really the man looked so like a simpleton, hesitating, and having nothing to say for himself, or that should excuse the peremptoriness of his demand upon me (when he knew I had been writing a letter which a gentleman waited for), that I flung from him, declaring that I would be mistress of my own time, and of my own actions, and not be called to account for either.

He was very uneasy till he could again be admitted into my company, and when I was obliged to see him, which was sooner than I liked, never did man put on a more humble and respectful demeanour.

He told me that he had, upon this occasion, been entering into himself, and had found a great deal of reason to blame himself for an impatiency and inconsideration which, although he meant nothing by it, must be very disagreeable to one of my delicacy. That having always aimed at a *manly sincerity* and *openness of heart*, he had not till now discovered that both were very consistent with that *true* politeness, which he feared he had too much disregarded, while he sought to avoid the con-

trary extreme; knowing that in me he had to deal with a lady who despised an hypocrite, and who was above all flattery. But from this time forth, I should find such an alteration in his whole behaviour as might be expected from a man who knew himself to be honoured with the presence and conversation of a person, *who had the most delicate mind in the world*—that was his flourish.

I said that he might perhaps expect congratulation upon the discovery he had just now made, to wit, that *true politeness* and *sincerity* were reconcilable: but that I, who had, by a perverse fate, been thrown into his company, had abundant reason to regret that he had no sooner found this out.—Since, I believed, very few men of *birth* and *education* were strangers to it.

He knew not, *neither*, he said, that he had so badly behaved himself, as to deserve so very severe a rebuke.

Perhaps not, I replied: but he might, if so, make another discovery from what I had said; which might be to *my own* disadvantage: since if he had so much reason to be satisfied with *himself*, he would see what an ungenerous person he spoke to, who, when he seemed to give himself airs of humility, which perhaps he thought beneath him to assume, had not the civility to make him a compliment upon them; but was ready to take him at his word.

He had long, with infinite pleasure, the pretended *flattery-hater* said, admired my *superior* talents, and a wisdom in so young a lady, perfectly surprising.

Let me, Madam, said he, stand ever so low in your opinion, I shall believe all you say to be just; and that I have nothing to do but to govern myself for the future by your example, and by the standard you shall be pleased to give me.

I know better, sir, replied I, than to value myself upon your volubility of speech. As you pretend to pay so preferable a regard to sincerity, you shall confine yourself to the strict rules of truth when you speak of me to myself: and then, although you shall be so kind as to imagine you have *reason* to make me a compliment, you

will have much more to pride yourself in those arts which have made so *extraordinary* a young creature so great a fool.

Really, my dear, the man deserves not politer treatment.—And then has he not made a fool, an egregious fool of me?—I am afraid he himself thinks he has.

I am surprised! I am amazed, Madam, returned he, at so strange a turn upon me!—I am very unhappy, that nothing I can do or say will give you a good opinion of me!—Would to Heaven that I knew what I *can* do to obtain the honour of your confidence!

I told him *that I desired his absence,* of all things. I saw not, I said, that my friends thought it worth their while to give me disturbance: therefore if he would set out for London, or Berkshire, or whither he pleased, it would be most agreeable to me, and most reputable too.

He would do so, he said, he *intended to do so,* the moment I was in a place to my liking—in a place convenient for me.

This, sir, will be so, said I, when you are not here to break in upon me, and make the apartments inconvenient.

He did not think this place safe, he replied; and as I intended not to stay here, he had not been so solicitous, as otherwise he should have been, to enjoin privacy to his servants, nor to Mrs. Greme at her leaving me; that there were two or three gentlemen in the neighbourhood, he said, with whose servants his gossiping fellows had scraped acquaintance: so that he could not think of leaving me here unguarded and unattended.—But fix upon any place in England where I could be out of danger, and he would go to the furthermost part of the king's dominions, if by doing so he could make me easy.

I told him plainly that I should never be in humour with myself for *meeting him;* nor with him, for *seducing me away:* that my regrets increased, instead of diminished: that my reputation was wounded: that nothing I could do would now retrieve it: and that he must not wonder, if I every hour grew more and more uneasy both

with myself and him: that, upon the whole, I was willing to take care of myself; and when *he* had left me, I should best know what to resolve upon, and whither to go.

He wished, he said, he were at liberty, without giving me offence, or being thought to intend to *infringe the articles I had stipulated and insisted upon,* to make one humble proposal to me. But the *sacred regard* he was determined *to pay to all my injunctions* (reluctantly as I had on Monday last put it into his power to serve me) would not permit him to make it, unless I would promise to excuse him, if I did not approve of it.

I asked, in some confusion, what he would say?

He prefaced and paraded on; and then out came, with great diffidence, and many apologies, and a bashfulness which sat very awkwardly upon him, a proposal of speedy solemnization: which, he said, would put all right; and make my first three or four months (which otherwise must be passed in obscurity and apprehension) a round of visits and visitings to and from all his relations; to Miss Howe; to whom I pleased: and would pave the way to the reconciliation I had so much at heart.

Your advice had great weight with me just then, as well as *his reasons,* and the consideration of my *unhappy situation.* But what could I say? I wanted somebody to speak for me.

The man saw I was not angry at his motion. I only blushed; and that I am sure I did up to the ears; and looked silly, and like a fool.

He wants not courage. Would he have had me catch at his first, at his *very* first word?—I was *silent* too—and do not the bold sex take silence for a mark of a favour!—Then, *so lately* in my father's house! Having also declared to *him* in my letters, before I had your advice, that I would not think of marriage till he had passed through a state of probation, as I may call it—how was it possible I could encourage, with *very* ready signs of approbation, such an early proposal? especially so soon after the free treatment he had provoked from me. If I were to die, I could not.

He looked at me with great confidence; as if (notwithstanding his contradictory bashfulness) he would look me through; while my eye but now and then could glance at him.—He begged my pardon with great humility: he was *afraid* I would think he deserved no other answer, but that of a *contemptuous silence*. True love was fearful of offending. [Take care, Mr. Lovelace, thought I, how your's is tried by that rule.] Indeed so *sacred a regard* [foolish man!] would he have *to all my declarations made before I honoured him*——

I would hear him no further; but withdrew in a confusion *too visible*, and left him to make his nonsensical flourishes to himself.

I will only add, that if he really wishes for a speedy solemnisation, he never could have had a luckier time to press for my consent to it. But he let it go off; and indignation has taken place of it. And now it shall be a point with me, to get him at a distance from me.

I am, my dearest friend,

Your ever faithful and obliged

CL. H.

—o—

LETTER XXXI.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Tuesday, April 13.

WHY, Jack, thou needest not make such a *wonderment*, as the girls say, if I should have taken large strides already towards reformation: for dost thou not see, that while I have been so assiduously, night and day, pursuing this single charmer, I have infinitely less to answer for than otherwise I should have had? Let me see, how many days and nights? —Forty, I believe, after open trenches, spent in the sap only, and never a mine sprung yet!

By a moderate computation, a dozen kites might have fallen while I have been only trying to ensnare this single

lark. Nor yet do I see when I shall be able to bring her to my lure: more innocent days yet, therefore!—But reformation for my stalking-horse, I hope, will be a sure, though a slow method to effect all my purposes.

Then, Jack, *thou* wilt have a merit too in engaging my pen, since thy time would be otherwise worse employed: and, after all, who knows but by creating new habits, at the expense of the old, a real reformation may be brought about? I have promised it; and I believe there is a pleasure to be found in being good, reversing that of Nat. Lee's madman,

—Which none but *good* men know.

By all this, seest thou not how greatly preferable it is, on twenty accounts, to pursue a difficult rather than an easy chase? I have a desire to inculcate this pleasure upon thee, and to teach thee to fly at nobler game than daws, crows, and wigeons. I have a mind to show thee from time to time, in the course of the correspondence thou hast so earnestly wished me to begin on this illustrious occasion, that these exalted ladies may be abased, and to obviate one of the objections that thou madest to me when we were last together, that the pleasure which attends these nobler aims, remunerates not the pains they bring with them; since, like a paltry fellow as thou wert, thou assertedst that all women are alike.

Thou knowest nothing, Jack, of the delicacies of intrigue: nothing of the glory of outwitting the witty and the watchful: of the joys that fill the mind of the inventive or contriving genius, ruminating which to use of the different webs that offer to him for the entanglement of a haughty charmer, who in her day has given him unnumbered torments. Thou, Jack, who like a dog at his ease, contentest thyself to growl over a bone thrown out to thee, dost not know the joys of a chase, and in pursuing a winding game: these I will endeavour to rouse thee to, and then thou wilt have reason doubly and trebly to thank me, as well because of thy present delight, as with regard to thy prospect beyond the moon.

To this place I had written, purely to amuse myself, befor I was admitted to my charmer. But now I have to tell thee that I was quite right in my conjecture that she would se up for herself, and dismiss me: for she has declared in s many words that such was her resolution. And why? Because, to be plain with me, the more she saw of *me*, and of *my ways*, the less she liked of either.

This cut me to the heart! I did not cry, indeed! Ha I been a *woman*, I should though, and that most plentifully but I pulled out a white cambric handkerchief: *that* I coul command, but not my *tears*.

She finds fault with my protestations, with my professions with my vows. I cannot curse a servant, the only privileg a master is known by, but I am supposed to be a trooper.*— I must not say, By my soul! nor, As I hope to be saved Why, Jack, how particular this is! Would she not hav me think I have a precious soul as well as she? If sh thinks my salvation hopeless, what a *devil* [another excep tionable word!] does she propose to reform me for? So I have not an ardent expression left me.

WHAT can be done with a woman who is above flattery and despises all praise but that which flows from the appro bation of her own heart?

Well, Jack, thou seest it is high time to change m measures. I must run into the *pious* a little faster than I had designed.

What a sad thing would it be, were I, after all, to los her person as well as her opinion! the only time that further acquaintance, and no blow struck, nor suspicion given, ever lessened me in a lady's favour! A cursed morti fication!—'Tis certain I can have no pretence for holdin her, if she will go. No such thing as force to be used, o so much as hinted at: Lord send us safe at London!- That's all I have for it now: and yet it must be the lea part of my speech.

But why will this admirable creature urge her destin

* See Letter XXI. of this volume.

Why will she defy the power she is absolutely dependent upon? Why will she still wish to my face that she had never left her father's house? Why will she deny me her company, till she makes me lose my patience, and lay myself open to her resentment? And why, when she is offended, does she carry her indignation to the utmost length that a scornful beauty, in the *very height* of her *power* and *pride*, can go?

Is it prudent, thinkest thou, in *her* circumstances, to tell me, *repeatedly* to tell me, 'That she is every hour more and 'more dissatisfied with herself and me? That I am not one 'who improve upon her in my conversation and address?' [Couldst *thou*, Jack, bear this from a captive!] 'That she 'shall not be easy while she is with me? That she was 'thrown upon me by a perverse fate? That she knows 'better than to value herself upon my volubility? That if 'I think she deserves the compliments I make her, I may 'pride myself in those arts, by which I have made a fool of 'so extraordinary a person? That she shall never forgive 'herself for *meeting me*, nor me for *seducing* her away?' [*Her very words.*] 'That her regrets increase instead of 'diminish? That she will take care of herself; and since 'her friends think it not worth while to pursue her, she will 'be left to her own care? That I shall make Mrs. Sorlings's 'house more agreeable by my absence?—And go to Berks, 'to town, or wherever I will' [to the devil, I suppose], 'with all her heart?'

The impolitic charmer!—To a temper so vindictive as she thinks mine! To a free-liver, as she believes me to be, who has her in his power!. I was *before*, as thou knowest, balancing; now this scale, now that, the heaviest. I only waited to see how *her* will would work, how *mine* would lead me on. Thou seest what bias hers takes—and wilt thou doubt hat mine will be determined by it? Were not her faults, efore this, numerous enough? Why will she put me upon ooking back?

I will sit down to argue with myself by and by, and thou ıall be acquainted with the result.

If thou didst but know, if thou hadst but beheld, wh an abject slave she made me look like!—I had given mys high airs, as *she* called them: but they were airs that show my love for her: that showed I could not live out of h company. But she took me down with a vengeance! Sh made me look about me. So much advantage had she ov me; such severe turns upon me; by my soul, Jack, I ha hardly a word to say for myself. I am ashamed to tell th what a poor creature she made me look like! But I coul have told her something that would have humbled her pret pride at the instant, had she been in a *proper* place, an *proper* company about her.

To such a place then—and where she cannot fly me- And *then* to see how my will works, and what can be don by the *amorous see-saw;* now humble, now proud; no expecting, or demanding; now submitting, or acquiescing- till I have tried resistance.

But these hints are at present enough. I may furth explain myself as I go along; and as I confirm or recec in my future motions. If she *will* revive past disobligs tions! If she *will*—but no more, no more, as I said *present*, of threatenings.

—o—

LETTER XXXII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

[In continuation.]

And do I not see that I shall need nothing but patienc in order to have all power with me? For what shall w say, if all these complaints of a character wounded; the declarations of increasing regrets for meeting me; of reser ments never to be got over for my *seducing* her away; th angry commands to leave her:—What shall we say, if were to mean nothing but MATRIMONY? And what if forbearing to enter upon that subject come out to be true cause of their petulance and uneasiness!

I had once before played about the skirts of the irrevocable obligation; but thought myself obliged to speak in clouds, and to run away from the subject, as soon as she took my meaning, lest she should imagine it to be *ungenerously urged*, now she was in some sort in my power, as she had forbid me beforehand to touch upon it, till I were in a state of visible reformation, and till a reconciliation with her friends were probable. But now, out-argued, out-talented, and pushed so vehemently *to leave* one of whom I had no good pretence to *hold*, if she *would* go; and who could so easily, if I had given her cause to doubt, have thrown herself into other protection, or have returned to Harlowe Place and Solmes; I spoke out upon the subject, and offered reasons although with infinite doubt and hesitation [*lest she should be offended at me*, Belford!], why she should assent to the legal tie, and make me the happiest of men. And oh, how the mantle cheek, the downcast eye, the silent yet trembling lip, and the heaving bosom, a sweet collection of heightened beauties, gave evidence that the tender was not mortally offensive!

Charming creature! thought I [*but I charge thee, that thou let not any of the sex know my exultation**], is it so *soon* come to this? Am I *already* lord of the destiny of a Clarissa Harlowe? Am I *already* the reformed man thou resolvest I *should* be, before I had the *least* encouragement given me? Is it thus, that *the more thou knowest me the less thou seest reason to approve of me?*—And can art and design enter into a breast so celestial? To banish me from thee, to insist so rigorously upon my absence, in order to bring me closer to thee, and make the blessing dear? Well do *thy* arts justify *mine;* and encourage me to let loose my plotting genius upon thee.

But let me tell thee, charming maid, if thy wishes are

* Mr. Lovelace might have spared this caution on this occasion, since many of the sex [we mention it with regret] who on the first publication had read thus far, and even to the lady's first escape, have been readier to censure her for over-niceness, as we have observed in a former note, page 156, than him for artifices and exultations not less cruel and ungrateful, than ungenerous and unmanly.

at all to be answered, that thou hast yet to account to me for thy reluctance to go off with me, at a crisis when thy going off was necessary to avoid being forced into the nuptial fetters with a wretch, that, were he not thy aversion, thou wert no more honest to thy own merit than to me.

I am *accustomed* to be preferred, let me tell thee, by thy equals in rank too, though thy inferiors in merit. But who is not so? And shall I marry a woman who has given me reason to doubt the preference she has for me?

No, my dearest love, I have too sacred a regard for thy *injunctions,* to let them be broken through, even by thyself. Nor will I take in thy full meaning by blushing silence only. Nor shalt thou give me room to doubt, whether it be necessity or love that inspires this condescending impulse.

Upon these principles, what had I to do but to construe her silence into contemptuous displeasure? And I begged her pardon for making a motion which I had so much *reason* to fear would offend her: for the future *I would pay a sacred* regard to her *previous injunctions,* and prove to her by all my conduct the truth of that observation, That true love is always fearful of offending.

And what could the lady say to this? methinks thou askest.

Say!—Why she looked vexed, disconcerted, teased; was at a loss, as I thought, whether to be more angry with herself, or with me. She turned about, however, as if to hide a starting tear; and drew a sigh into two or three but just audible quavers, trying to suppress it, and withdrew—leaving me master of the field.

Tell me not of politeness; tell me not of generosity; tell me not of compassion—Is she not a match for me? *More* than a match? Does she not outdo me at every fair weapon? Has she not made me doubt her love? Has she not taken officious pains to declare that she was not averse to Solmes for any respect she had to me? and her sorrow for putting herself out of *his* reach; that is to say, for meeting me?

Then what a triumph would it be to the *Harlowe pride* were I now to marry this lady! A family beneath my own

me in it worthy of an alliance with but her! My own
e not contemptible! Living within the bounds of it,
oid dependence upon *their* betters, and obliged to no
living! My expectations still so much *more* consider-

My person, my talents—not to be despised, surely—
ejected by them with scorn. Obliged to carry on an
rhand address to their daughter, when two of the most
derable families in the kingdom have made overtures
n I have declined, partly for her sake, and partly
ıse I never will marry; if *she* be not the person. To
rced to *steal* her away, not only from *them*, but from
f! And must I be brought to implore forgiveness
econciliation from the Harlowes?—Beg to be acknow-
d as the *son* of a gloomy tyrant, whose only boast is
iches? As a *brother* to a wretch who has conceived
ortal hatred to me; and to a sister who was beneath
ttempts, or I would have had her *in my own way*, and
with a tenth part of the trouble and pains that her
has cost me; and, finally, as a *nephew* to uncles, who
themselves upon their *acquired* fortunes, would insult
ıs creeping to them on that account?—Forbid it the
l of the Lovelaces, that your *last*, and, let me say, not
meanest of your stock, should thus creep, thus fawn,
lick the dust, for a WIFE!—
roceed anon.

—o—

LETTER XXXIII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

[In continuation.]

is it not the divine CLARISSA [*Harlowe* let me not
my soul spurns them all but her] whom I am thus by
cation threatening?—If virtue be the true nobility,
is she ennobled, and how shall an alliance with her
ble, were not contempt due to the family from which
ɔrung and prefers to me!

But again, let me stop.—Is there not something wrong *has* there not been something wrong, in this divine creature. And will not the reflections upon that wrong (what though it may be construed in *my favour?**) make me unhappy, when *novelty* has lost its charms, and when, mind and person, she is all my own? Libertines are nicer, if *at all* nice, than other men. They seldom meet with the stand of virtue in the women whom they attempt. And by the frailty of those they have triumphed over, they judge of all the rest. '*Importunity* and *opportunity* no woman is proof 'against, especially from the persevering lover, who knows 'how to suit temptations to inclinations:' This, thou knowest, is a prime article of the rake's creed.

And what! (methinks thou askest with surprise), Dost thou question this most admirable of women?—The virtue of a CLARISSA dost thou question?

I do not, I dare not question it. My reverence for her will not let me *directly* question it. But let me, in my turn, ask thee—Is not, may not her virtue be founded rather in *pride* than in *principle?* Whose daughter is she?—And is she not a *daughter?* If impeccable, how came she by her impeccability? The pride of setting an example to her sex has run away with her hitherto, and may have made her till *now* invincible. But is not that pride abated? What may not both *men* and *women* be brought to do in a *mortified state?* What mind is superior to calamity? Pride is perhaps the principal bulwark of female virtue. Humble a woman, and may she not be *effectually* humbled?

Then who says Miss Clarissa Harlowe is the paragon of virtue?—Is virtue itself?

All who know her, and have heard of her, it will be answered.

Common bruit!—Is virtue to be established by common bruit only?—Has her virtue ever been *proved?*—Who has dared to try her virtue?

* The particular attention of such of the fair sex as are more apt to read for the sake of amusement than instruction, is requested to this letter of Mr. Lovelace.

I told thee I would sit down to argue with myself; and I have drawn myself into argumentation before I was aware.

Let me enter into a strict discussion of this subject.

I know how ungenerous an appearance what I *have* said, and what I have *further* to say, on this topic, will have from *me:* but am I not bringing virtue to the touchstone, with a view to exalt it, if it come out to be proof?—'Avaunt, then, 'for one moment, all consideration that may arise from a 'weakness which some would miscall *gratitude;* and is 'oftentimes the corrupter of a heart not ignoble!'

To the test then—and I will bring this charming creature to the *strictest* test, 'that all the sex, who may be shown 'any passages in my letters' [and I know thou cheerest the hearts of all thy acquaintance with such detached parts of mine as tend not to dishonour characters or reveal names; and this gives me an appetite to oblige thee by *interlardment*], '*that all the sex,* I say, may see what they 'ought to be; what is *expected* from them; and if they have 'to deal with a person of reflection and punctilio [of *pride,* 'if thou wilt], how careful they ought to be, by a regular 'and uniform conduct, not to give him cause to think 'lightly of them for favours granted, which may be inter-'preted into *natural weakness.* For is not a wife the keeper 'of a man's honour? And do not her faults bring more 'disgrace upon a husband than even upon herself?'

It is not for nothing, Jack, that I have disliked the life of shackles.

To the test then, as I said, since now I have the question brought home to me, Whether I am to have a wife? And whether she be to be a wife at the *first* or at the *second* hand?

I will proceed fairly. I will do the dear creature not only strict but generous justice; for I will try her by her own judgment, as well as by our principles.

She blames herself for having corresponded with me, a man of free character; and one indeed whose *first* view it was to draw her into this correspondence; and who succeeded in it by means unknown to herself.

'Now, what were her inducements to this correspond-'ence?' If not what her niceness makes her *think* blame-worthy, why does she blame herself?

Has she been *capable* of error? Of persisting in that error?

Whoever was the *tempter*, that is not the thing; nor what the *temptation*. The *fact*, the *error*, is now before us.

Did she persist in it against parental prohibition?

She owns she did.

Was a daughter ever known who had higher notions of the filial duty, of the parental authority?

Never.

'What must be those inducements, how strong, that were '*too strong* for duty, in a daughter so *dutiful?*—What must '*my* thoughts have been of these inducements, what *my* 'hopes built upon them *at the time*, taken in this light?'

Well, but it will be said that her principal view was to prevent mischief between her brother and her other friends, and the man vilely insulted by them all.

But why should *she* be more concerned for the safety of others than they were for their own? And had not the *rencounter* then happened? 'Was a person of virtue to be 'prevailed upon to break through her *apparent*, her *acknow-'ledged* duty, upon *any* consideration?' And, if not, was she to be so prevailed upon to prevent an *apprehended* evil only?

Thou, Lovelace, the tempter (thou wilt again break out and say) to be the accuser!

But I am *not* the accuser. I am the arguer only, and, in my heart, all the time acquit and worship the divine creature. 'But let me, nevertheless, examine whether the 'acquittal be owing to her *merit*, or to my *weakness*—Weak-ness the true name for love!'

But shall we suppose another motive?—And that is LOVE; a motive which all the world will excuse her for. 'But let 'me tell all the world that do, *not* because they *ought*, but 'because all the world is apt to be misled by it.'

Let LOVE then be the motive:—Love of *whom?*

A *Lovelace*, is the answer.

'Is there but *one* Lovelace in the world? May not *more* 'Lovelaces be attracted by so fine a figure? By such ex- 'alted qualities? It was her character that drew me to her: 'and it was her beauty and good sense that riveted my 'chains: and now all together make me think her a subject 'worthy of my attempts, worthy of my ambition.'

But has she had the candour, the openness, to *acknowledge* that love?

She has not.

'Well then, if love be at the bottom, is there not another 'fault lurking beneath the shadow of that love?—Has she 'not *affectation?*—Or is it *pride of heart?*'

And what results?—'Is then the divine Clarissa capable 'of *loving* a man whom she ought *not* to love? And is she 'capable of *affectation?* And is her virtue founded in '*pride?*—And if the answer to these questions be affirma- 'tive, must she not then be a *woman?*'

And can she keep this love at bay? Can she make *him* who has been accustomed to triumph over other women, tremble? Can she conduct herself, as to make him, at times, question whether she loves *him* or *any* man; 'yet 'not have the requisite command over the passion itself in 'steps of the highest consequence to her honour, as *she* 'thinks' [*I am trying her*, Jack, *by her own thoughts*], 'but 'suffer herself to be provoked to promise to abandon her 'father's house, and go off with him, knowing his character; 'and even conditioning not to marry till improbable and 'remote contingencies were to come to pass? What though 'the provocations were such as would justify any other 'woman; yet was a CLARISSA to be susceptible to provoca- 'tions which she thinks *herself* highly censurable for being 'so much moved by?'

But let us see the dear creature resolved to revoke her promise, yet *meeting* her lover; a bold and intrepid man, who was more than once before disappointed by her; and who comes, as she knows, prepared to expect the fruits of her appointment, and resolved to carry her off. And let us

see him actually carrying her off, and having her at his mer
—'May there not be, I repeat, *other* Lovelaces; other *li*
'intrepid, persevering enterprisers; although they may n
'go to work in the same way?

'And has then a CLARISSA (herself her judge) failed?—I
'such *great* points failed?—And may she not *further* fail
'—Fail in the *greatest* point, to which all the other point
'in which she *has* failed, have but a natural tendency?'

Nor say thou that virtue, in the eye of Heaven, is
much a *manly* as a *womanly* grace. By virtue in this pla
I mean chasity, and to be superior to temptation; n
Clarissa out of the question. Nor ask thou, shall the m
be guilty, yet expect the woman to be guiltless, and ev
unsuspectable? Urge thou not these arguments, I say, sin
the wife, by a failure, may do much more injury to t
husband, than the husband can do to the wife, and not on
to her husband, but to all his family, by obtruding anoth
man's children into his possessions, perhaps to the exclusi
of (at least to a participation with) his own; he believi
them all the time to be his. In the eye of Heaven, ther
fore, the sin *cannot* be equal. Besides I have read in son
places *that the woman was made for the man*, not *the m
for the woman*. Virtue then is less to be dispensed with
the woman than in the man.

Thou, Lovelace (methinks some better man than th
self will say), to expect such perfection in a woman!

Yes, I, may I answer. Was not the great Cæsar
great rake as to women? Was he not called, by his ve
soldiers, on one of his triumphant entries into Rome, *t
bald-pated lecher?* and warning given of him to the *wiv*
as well as to the daughters of his fellow-citizens? Y
did not Cæsar repudiate his wife for being only in co
pany with Clodius, or rather because Clodius, though
surprise upon her, was found in hers? And what w
the reason he gave for it?—It was this (though a r
himself, as I have said), and only this—*The wife of Cæ
must not be suspected!*—

Cæsar was not a prouder man than Lovelace.

Go to then, Jack; nor say, nor let anybody say, in thy hearing, that Lovelace, a man valuing himself upon his ancestry, is singular in his expectations of a wife's purity, though not pure himself.

As to my CLARISSA, I own that I hardly think there ever was such an angel of a woman. But has she not, as above, already taken steps which she herself condemns? Steps which the world and her own family did not think her *capable* of taking? And for which her own family will not forgive her?

Nor think it strange that I refuse to hear anything pleaded in behalf of a standard virtue from high *provocations*. 'Are not provocations and temptations the tests 'of virtue? A standard virtue must not be allowed to 'be *provoked* to destroy or annihilate itself.

'May not then the success of him who could carry her '*thus far*, be allowed to be an encouragement for him to 'try to carry her *further?*' 'Tis but to try. Who will be afraid of a trial for this divine creature? 'Thou 'knowest that I have more than once, twice, or thrice, 'put to the fiery trial young women of name and char-'acter; and never yet met with one who held out a month; 'nor indeed so long as could puzzle my invention. I have 'concluded against the whole sex upon it.' And now, if I have not found a virtue that cannot be corrupted, I will swear that there is not one such in the whole sex. Is not then the whole sex concerned that this trial should be made? And who is it that knows this lady, that would not stake upon her head the honour of the whole?—Let her who would refuse it come forth, and desire to stand in her place.

I must assure thee that I have a prodigious high opinion of virtue; as I have of all those graces and excellences which I have not been able to attain myself. Every free-liver would not *say* this, nor *think* thus—every argument he uses, condemnatory of his own actions, as some would *think*. But ingenuousness was ever a signal part of my character.

Satan, whom thou mayest, if thou wilt, in this case, c my instigator, put the good man of old upon the sever trial. 'To his behaviour under these trials that good m 'owed his honour and his future rewards.' An innoce person, if doubted, must wish to be brought to a fair a candid trial.

Rinaldo, indeed, in Ariosto, put the Mantua Knigh cup of trial from him, which was to be the proof of l wife's chastity.* —This was his argument for forbearing t experiment: 'Why should I seek a thing I should be lo 'to find? My wife is a woman. The sex is frail. 'cannot believe better of her than I do. It will be to r 'own loss, if I find reason to think worse.' But Rinal would not have refused the trial of the lady, before s *became* his wife, and when he might have found his accou in detecting her.

For my part, I would not have put the cup from n though married, had it been but in hope of finding reas to confirm my *good* opinion of my wife's honour; a that I might know whether I had a snake or a dove in r bosom.

To my point—'What must that virtue be which v 'not stand a trial?—What that woman who would w 'to shun it?'

Well, then, a trial seems necessary for the *further* es blishment of the honour of so excellent a creature.

And who shall put her to this trial? Who, but the m who has, as she thinks, already induced her in *lesser* poi to swerve?—And this for her *own sake* in a double sense not only as he has been able to make *some* impressi but as she *regrets* the impression made; and so may presumed to be guarded against his further attempts.

The situation she is at present in, it must be confess is a disadvantageous one to her: but, if she overcor that will redound to her honour.

Shun not, therefore, my dear soul, further trials, r

* The story tells us, that whoever drank of this cup, if his wife w chaste, could drink without spilling; if otherwise, the contrary.

hate me for making them.—'For what woman can be 'said to be virtuous till she has been tried?

'Nor is *one* effort, *one* trial, to be sufficient. Why? 'Because a woman's heart may be at one time *adamant*, 'at another *wax*'—as I have often experienced. And so, no doubt, hast thou.

A fine time of it, methinks thou sayest, would the women have, if they were all to be tried!—

But, Jack, I am not for that neither. Though I am a rake, I am not a rake's friend; except thine and company's.

And be this one of the morals of my tedious discussion —'Let the little rogues who would not be *put to the* '*question*, as I may call it, choose accordingly. Let them 'prefer to their favour good, honest, sober fellows, who 'have not been used to play dog's tricks: who will be 'willing to take them as they *offer*; and who being toler- 'able themselves, are not suspicious of others.'

But what, methinks thou askest, is to become of the lady if she fail?

What?—Why will she not, '*if once subdued*, be *always subdued?*' Another of our libertine maxims. And what an immense pleasure to a marriage-hater, what rapture to thought, to be able to prevail upon such a woman as Miss Clarissa Harlowe to live with him, without *real* change of name!

But if she resist—if nobly she stand her trial?—

Why then I will marry her; and bless my stars for such an angel of a wife.

But will she not hate thee?—will she not refuse?

No, no, Jack!—Circumstanced and situated as we are, I am not afraid of that. And hate me! Why should she hate the man who loves her upon proof?

And then for a little hint at *reprisal*—am I not justified in my resolutions of trying *her* virtue, who is resolved, as I may say, to try *mine?* Who has declared that she will not marry me, till she has hopes of my reformation?

And now, to put an end to this sober argumentation, wilt thou not thyself (whom I have supposed an advocate

for the lady, because I know that Lord M. has put thee upon using the interest he thinks thou hast in me, to persuade me to enter the pale; *wilt thou not thyself*) allow me to try if I cannot awaken the *woman* in her?—To try if she, with all that glowing symmetry of parts, and that full bloom of vernal graces, by which she attracts every eye, be really inflexible as to the grand article?

Let me begin then, as opportunity presents—I will; and watch her every step to find one sliding one; her every moment to find the moment critical. And the rather, as she spares not me, but takes every advantage that offers to puzzle and plague me.; nor expects nor thinks me to be a good man.

If she be a *woman,* and *love* me, I shall surely catch her once tripping: for love was ever a traitor to its harbourer: and love *within,* and I *without,* she will be *more* than woman, as the poet says, or I *less* than man, if I succeed not.

Now, Belford, all is out. The lady is mine; shall I be *more* mine. Marriage, I see, is in my power, now *she* is so. Else perhaps it had not. If I can have her *without* marriage, who can blame me for trying? If *not,* great will be her glory, and my future confidence. And well will she merit the sacrifice I shall make her of my liberty; and from me her sex honours next to divine, for giving a proof 'that 'there was once a woman whose virtue no trials, no stratagems, no temptations, even from the man she hated most, 'could overpower.'

Now wilt thou see all my circulation: as in a glass will thou see it.—CABALA,* however, is the word; nor let the secret escape thee even in thy dreams.

Nobody doubts that she is to be my wife. Let her pass for such when I give the word. 'Meantime reformation 'shall be my stalking-horse; some one of the women of 'London, if I can get her thither, my bird.' And so much for this time.

* This word, whenever used by any of these gentlemen, was agreed imply an inviolable secret.

LETTER XXXIV.

Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

[In answer to Letters XXIV. and XXX.]

Do not be so much concerned, my dearest friend, at the bickerings between my mother and me. We love one another dearly notwithstanding. If my mother had not me to find fault with, she must find fault with somebody else. And as to me, I am a very saucy girl; and were there not this occasion, there would be some other, to show it.

You have heard me *say* that this was always the case between us. You could not *otherwise* have known it. For when *you* was with us, you harmonised us both; and, indeed, I was always more afraid of you than of my mother. But then that awe is accompanied with love. Your reproofs, as I have always found, are so charmingly mild and instructive; so evidently calculated to improve, and not to provoke; that a generous temper must be amended by them. But hear now, mind my good mamma, when you are not with us—*You* shall, *I tell you, Nancy. I will* have *it so. Don't* I *know best,* I *won't be disobeyed.* How can a daughter of spirit bear such language; such looks too with the language; and not have a longing mind to disobey?

Don't advise me, my dear, to subscribe to my mother's prohibition of correspondence with you. She has no reason for it. Nor would she of her own judgment have prohibited it. That odd old ambling soul, your uncle (whose visits are frequenter than ever), instigated by your malicious and selfish brother and sister, is the occasion. And they only have borrowed my mother's lips, at the distance they are from you, for a sort of speaking trumpet for them. The prohibition, once more I say, cannot come from her heart. But if it did, is so much danger to be apprehended from my continuing to write to one of my own sex, as if I wrote to one of the other? Don't let dejection and disappointment, and the course of oppression which you have run through,

weaken your mind, my dearest creature, and make you inconveniences where there possibly cannot be any. *your* talent is *scribbling*, as you call it, so is *mine*—an will scribble on, at all opportunities; and to you; let th say what they will. Nor let your letters be filled with self-accusations you mention: there is no cause for th I wish that your Anna Howe, who continues in her moth house, were but half so good as Miss Clarissa Harlowe, w has been driven out of her father's.

I will say nothing upon your letter to your sister till I the effect it will have. You hope, you tell me, that y shall have your money and clothes sent you, notwithsta ing my opinion to the contrary—I am sorry to have it acquaint you, that I have just now heard that they h sat in council upon your letter; and that your mother w the only person who was for sending you your things, a was overruled. I charge you therefore to accept of my of as by my last: and give me particular directions for wh you want, that I can supply you with besides.

Don't set your thoughts so much upon a reconciliation to prevent your laying hold of any handsome opportun to give yourself a protector; such a one as the man will who, I imagine, husband-like, will let nobody insult y but himself.

What could he mean by letting slip such a one as th you mention? I don't know how to blame you; for h could you go beyond silence and blushes, when the fool fellow came with his observances of the restrictions whi you laid him under when in another situation? But, a told you above, you really strike people into awe. An upon my word, you did not spare him.

I repeat what I said in my last, that you have a very n part to act: and I will add that you have a mind that much too delicate for your part. But when the lover exalted, the lady must be humbled. He is naturally pro and saucy. I doubt you must engage his *pride*, which calls his *honour*: and that you must throw off a little m of the veil. And I would have you restrain your wis

before him, that you had not met him, and the like. What signifies wishing, my dear? He will not bear it. You can hardly expect that he will.

Nevertheless, it vexes me to the very bottom of my pride, that any wretch of that sex should be able to triumph over Clarissa.

I cannot, however, but say that I am charmed with your spirit. So much sweetness, where sweetness is requisite; so much spirit, where spirit is called for—what a *true* magnanimity!

But I doubt, in your present circumstances, you must endeavour after a little more of the reserve, in cases where you are displeased with him, and palliate a little. That humility which he puts on when you rise upon him, is not natural to him.

Methinks I see the man hesitating, and looking like the fool you paint him, under your corrective superiority!—But he is not a fool. Don't put him upon mingling resentment with his love.

You are very serious, my dear, in the first of the two letters before me, in relation to Mr. Hickman and me; and in relation to my mother and me. But as to the latter, you must not be too grave. If we are not well together at one time, we are not ill together at another. And while I am able to make her smile in the midst of the most angry fit she ever fell into on the present occasion (though sometimes she would not if she could help it), it is a very good sign; a sign that displeasure can never go deep, or be lasting. And then a kind word, or kind look, to her favourite Hickman, sets the one into raptures, and the other in tolerable humour, at any time.

But your case pains me at heart; and with all my levity, *both* the good folks must sometimes partake of that pain; nor will it be over as long as you are in a state of uncertainty; and especially as I was not able to prevail for that protection for you which would have prevented the unhappy step, the necessity for which we both, with so much reason, deplore.

I have only to add (and yet it is needless to tell you) tha I am, and will ever be,

Your affectionate friend and servant,

ANNA HOWE.

—o—

LETTER XXXV.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

YOU tell me, my dear, that my clothes and the little sur of money I left behind me, will not be sent me.—But I wi still hope. It is yet early days. When their passions sub side, they will better consider of the matter; and especiall as I have my ever dear and excellent mother for my frien in this request. Oh, the sweet indulgence! How has m heart bled, and how does it still bleed for her!

You advise me not to depend upon a reconciliation. I d not, I cannot depend upon it. But nevertheless it is th wish next my heart. And as to this man, what can I dc You see *that marriage is not absolutely in my own power,* I were *inclined* to prefer it to the trial which I think I ougl to have principally in view to make for a reconciliation.

You say he is proud and insolent—indeed he is. B can it be your opinion that he intends to humble me dow to the level of his mean pride?

And what mean you, my dear friend, when you say th I must throw off a *little more of the veil?*—Indeed I nev knew that I wore one. Let me assure you that if I see an thing in Mr. Lovelace that looks like a design to humble m his insolence shall never make me discover a weakness u worthy of a person distinguished by your friendship; that to say, unworthy either of my *sex*, or of my *former self.*

But I hope, as I am out of all other protection, that he not capable of mean or low resentments. If he has had an extraordinary trouble on my account, may he not thank hin self for it? He may; and lay it, if he pleases, to his *cha acter;* which, as I have told him, gave at least a *pretence* t

my brother against him. And then, did I ever make him any promises? Did I ever profess a love for him? Did I ever wish for the continuance of his address? Had not my brother's violence precipitated matters, would not my indifference to him in all likelihood (as I designed it should) have tired out his proud spirit,* and made him set out for London, where he used chiefly to reside? And if he *had*, would there not have been an end of all his pretensions and hopes? For no encouragement had I given him; nor did I then correspond with him. Nor, believe me, should I have begun to do so—the fatal rencounter not having then happened; which drew me in afterwards for others' sakes (fool that I was!) and not for my own. And can you think, or can *he*, that even this but temporarily-intended correspondence (which, by the way, my mother† connived at) would have ended thus, had I not been driven on one hand, and teased on the other, to continue it, the occasion which had at first induced it continuing? What pretence then has he, were I to be absolutely in his power, to avenge himself on me for the faults of others, and through which I have suffered more than he? It cannot, cannot be, that I should have cause to apprehend him to be so ungenerous, so bad a man.

You bid me not be concerned at the bickerings between your mother and you. Can I avoid concern, when those bickerings are on my account? That they are raised (instigated, shall I say?) by my uncle, and my other relations, surely must add to my concern.

But I must observe, perhaps too critically for the state my mind is in at present, that the very sentences you give from your mother, as so many *imperatives*, which you take amiss, are very severe reflections upon yourself. For instance—*You* shall, *I tell you, Nancy*, implies that you had disputed her will—and so of the rest.

And further let me observe, with respect to what you say, that there cannot be the same reason for a prohibition of correspondence with me, as there was of mine with Mr. Lovelace; that I thought as little of bad consequences from

* See vol. i. Letter IV. † Ibid.

my correspondence with him at the time, as you can do fro yours with me now. But if *obedience be a duty*, the *breac* of it is a *fault*, however circumstances may differ. Surel there is no merit in setting up our own judgment again the judgments of our parents. And if it be punishable so I do, I have been severely punished; and that is what I warne you of from my own dear experience.

Yet, God forgive me! I advise thus against myself wit very great reluctance: and, to say truth, have not strengt of mind, at present, to decline it myself. But if my occa sion go not off, I will take it into further consideration.

You give me very good advice in relation to this man and I thank you for it. When you bid me be more upo the *reserve* with him in expressing my displeasure, perha I may try for it: but to *palliate*, as you call it, that, m dearest Miss Howe, cannot be done, by

Your own

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

—o—

LETTER XXXVI.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

You may believe, my dear Miss Howe, that the circum stances of the noise and outcry within the garden door, c Monday last, gave me no small uneasiness, to think that was in the hands of a man who could, by such vile pr meditation, lay a snare to trick me out of myself, as I ha so frequently called it.

Whenever he came in my sight, the thought of this ga me an indignation that made his presence disgustful to me and the more, as I fancied I beheld in his face a triump which reproached my weakness on that account; althoug perhaps it was only the same vivacity and placidness tha generally sit upon his features.

I was resolved to task him upon this subject, the first tim

I could have patience to enter upon it with him. For, besides that it piqued me excessively from the nature of the artifice, I expected shuffling and evasion, if he were guilty, that would have incensed me: and if not confessedly guilty, such unsatisfactory declarations as still would have kept my mind doubtful and uneasy; and would, upon every new offence that he might give me, sharpen my disgust to me.

I have had the opportunity I waited for; and will lay before you the result.

He was making his court to my good opinion in very polite terms, and with great seriousness lamenting that he had lost it; declaring, that he knew not how he had deserved to do so; attributing to me an indifference to him, that seemed, to his infinite concern, hourly to increase. And he besought me to let him know my whole mind, that he might have an opportunity either to confess his faults and amend them, or clear his conduct to my satisfaction, and thereby entitle himself to a greater share of my confidence.

I answered him with quickness—Then, Mr. Lovelace, I will tell you one thing with a frankness, that is, perhaps, more suitable to *my* character than to *yours* [*He hoped not, he said*], which gives me a very bad opinion of you, as a designing, artful man.

I am all attention, Madam.

I never can think tolerably of you, while the noise and voice I heard at the garden door, which put me into the terror you took so much advantage of, remains unaccounted for. Tell me fairly, tell me candidly, the whole of that circumstance; and of your dealings with that wicked Joseph Leman; and according to your explicitness in this particular, I shall form a judgment of your future professions.

I will, without reserve, my dearest life, said he, tell you the whole; and hope that my sincerity in the relation will atone for anything you may think wrong in the fact.

'I knew nothing, *said he*, of this man, this Leman, and 'should have scorned a resort to so low a method as bribing 'the servant of any family to let me into the secrets of that

'family, if I had not detected him in attempting to corrup
'a servant of mine, to inform him of all my motions, of a
'my supposed intrigues, and, in short, of every action of m
'private life, as well as of my circumstances and engage
'ments; and this for motives too obvious to be dwelt upo

'My servant told me of his offers, and I ordered him, ur
'known to the fellow, to let me hear a conversation tha
'was to pass between them.

'In the midst of it, and just as he had made an offer o
'money for a particular piece of intelligence, promisin
'more when procured, I broke in upon them, and by bluste
'calling for a knife to cut off his ears (one of which I too
'hold of) in order to make a present of it, as I said, to h
'employers, I obliged him to tell me who they were.

'Your brother, Madam, and your uncle Antony, h
'named.

'It was not difficult, when I had given him my pardo
'on naming them (after I had set before him the enormit
'of the task he had undertaken, and the honourableness o
'my intentions to your dear self), to prevail upon him, by
'larger reward, to serve me; since, at the same time, h
'might preserve the favour of your uncle and brother, as
'desired to know nothing but what related to myself and t
'you, in order to guard us both against the effects of an il
'will, which all his fellow-servants, as well as himself, as h
'acknowledged, thought undeserved.

'By this means, I own to you, Madam, I frequent
'turned his principals about upon a pivot of my own, u
'known to themselves: and the fellow, who is always cal
'ing himself a *plain man*, and boasting of his *conscience*, w
'the easier, as I condescended frequently to assure him
'my honourable views; and as he knew that the use I ma
'of his intelligence, in all likelihood prevented fat
'mischiefs.

'I was the more pleased with his services, as (let r
'acknowledge to you, Madam) they procured to you, u
'known to yourself, a safe and uninterrupted egress (whi
'perhaps would not otherwise have been continued to y

'so long as it was) to the garden and wood-house: for he 'undertook, to them, to watch all your motions: and the 'more cheerfully (for the fellow loves you), as it kept off 'the curiosity of others.' *

So, my dear, it comes out that I *myself* was obliged to this deep contriver.

I sat in silent astonishment; and thus he went on.

'As to the circumstance for which you think so hardly 'of me, I do freely confess that having a suspicion that you 'would revoke your intention of getting away, and in that 'case apprehending that we should not have the time to-'gether that was necessary for that purpose; I had ordered 'him to keep off everybody he *could* keep off, and to be 'himself within view of the garden door; for I was deter-'mined, if possible, to induce you to adhere to your resolu-'tion.'—

But pray, sir, interrupting him, how came you to apprehend that I should revoke my intention? I had indeed deposited a letter to that purpose; but you had it not: and how, as I had reserved to myself the privilege of a revocation, did you know but I might have prevailed upon my friends, and so have revoked upon good grounds?

'I will be very ingenuous, Madam—You had made me 'hope that if you changed your mind, you would give me 'a meeting to apprise me of the reasons for it. I went to 'the loose bricks, and I saw the letter there: and as I knew 'your friends were immovably fixed in their schemes, I 'doubted not but the letter was to revoke or suspend your 'resolution; and probably to serve instead of a meeting too. 'I therefore let it lie, that if you *did* revoke, you might be 'under the necessity of meeting me for the sake of the 'expectation you had given me: and as I came prepared, 'I was resolved, pardon me, Madam, whatever were your 'intentions, that you should not go back. Had I taken 'your letter I must have been determined by the contents of 'it, for the present at least: but not having received it, and 'you having reason to think I wanted not resolution in a

* See vol. ii. Letter III.

'situation so desperate, to make your friends a personal visit,
'I depended upon the interview you had bid me hope for.'

Wicked wretch, said I; it is my grief that I gave you opportunity to take so exact a measure of my weakness!—But *would* you have presumed to visit the family, had I not met you?

Indeed I would. I had some friends in readiness, who were to have accompanied me to them. And had your father refused to give me audience, I would have taken my friends with me to Solmes.

And what did you intend to do to Mr. Solmes?

Not the least hurt, had the man been passive.

But had he *not* been passive, as you call it, what would you have done to Mr. Solmes?

He was loth, he said, to tell me—yet not the least hurt to his *person.*

I repeated my question.

If he *must* tell me, he only proposed to carry off the *poor fellow,* and to hide him for a month or two. And this he would have done, let what would have been the consequence.

Was ever such a wretch heard of!—I sighed from the bottom of my heart; but bid him proceed from the part I had interrupted him at.

'I ordered the fellow, as I told you, Madam, said he,
'to keep within view of the garden door: and if he found
'any parley between us, and anybody coming (before
'you could retreat undiscovered) whose coming might be
'attended with violent effects, he should cry out; and this
'not only in order to save himself from their suspicions of
'him, but to give me warning to make off, and, if possible,
'to induce you (I own it, Madam) to go off with me,
'according to your own appointment. And I hope all
'circumstances considered, and the danger I was in of
'losing you for ever, that the acknowledgment of *that* con-
'trivance, or if you had *not* met me, *that* upon Solmes, will
'not procure me your hatred: for, had they come as *I*
'expected as well as *you,* what a despicable wretch had I
'been, could I have left you to the insults of a brother and

'others of your family, whose mercy was cruelty when they 'had *not* the pretence with which this detected interview 'would have furnished them!'

What a wretch! said I.—But if, sir, taking your own account of this strange matter to be fact, anybody were coming, how happened it that I saw only that man Leman (I *thought* it was he) out at the door, and at a distance look after us?

Very lucky! said he, putting his hand first in one pocket, then in another—I hope I have not thrown it away—it is, perhaps, in the coat I had on yesterday—little did I think it would be necessary to be produced—but I love to come to a demonstration whenever I can—I *may* be giddy—I *may* be heedless. I *am* indeed—but no man, as to *you*, Madam, ever had a sincerer heart.

He then stepping to the parlour door, called his servant to bring him the coat he had on yesterday.

The servant did. And in the pocket, rumpled up as a paper he regarded not, he pulled out a letter, written by that Joseph, dated Monday night; in which 'he begs 'pardon for crying out so soon—says that his fears of 'being discovered to act on both sides, had made him take 'the rushing of a little dog (that always follows him) 'through the phyllirea-hedge, for Betty's being at hand, 'or some of his masters: and that when he found his mis-'take, he opened the door by his own key (which the con-'triving wretch confessed he had furnished him with), and 'inconsiderately ran out in a hurry, to have apprised him 'that his crying out was owing to his fright only:' and he added, 'that they were upon the hunt for me, by the 'time he returned.'*

I shook my head—Deep! deep! deep! said I, at the best!—O Mr. Lovelace! God forgive and reform you!—But you are, I see plainly (upon the whole of your own account), a very artful, a very designing man.

Love, my dearest life, is ingenious. Night and day have

* See his Letter to Joseph Leman, No. XVIII. of this volume, towards the end, where he tells him he would contrive for him a letter of this nature to copy.

I racked my stupid brain [*Oh, sir, thought I, not stupid 'Twere well perhaps if it were*], to contrive methods t prevent the sacrifice designed to be made of you, and th mischief that must have ensued upon it: so little hold i your affections: such undeserved antipathy from you friends: so much danger of losing you for ever from *bot* causes. I have not had for the whole fortnight before las Monday, half an hour's rest at a time. And I own to you Madam, that I should never have forgiven myself, had omitted any contrivance or forethought that would hav prevented your return without me.

Again I blamed myself for meeting him: and justly; fo there were many chances to one that I had *not* met him And if I had not, all his fortnight's contrivances, as to m would have come to nothing; and, perhaps, I might nevei theless have escaped Solmes.

Yet, had he resolved to come to Harlowe Place with h friends, and been insulted as he certainly would have bee what mischiefs might have followed!

But his resolutions to run away with and to hide the poo Solmes for a month or so, oh, my dear! what a wretc have I let run away with *me*, instead of *Solmes!*

I asked him if he thought such enormities as thes such defiances of the laws of society, would have passe unpunished?

He had the assurance to say, with one of his usual ga airs, that he should by this means have disappointed h enemies, and saved me from a forced marriage. He ha no pleasure in such desperate pushes. Solmes he woul not have *personally* hurt. He must have fled his countr for a time at least: and, truly, if he had been obliged t do so (as all his hopes of my favour must have been at a end), he would have had a fellow-traveller of his own se out of our family, whom I little thought of.

Was ever such a wretch!—To be sure he meant m brother!

And such, sir, said I, in high resentment, are the us you make of your corrupt intelligencer——

My corrupt intelligencer, Madam! interrupted he, he is to this hour your brother's as well as mine. By what I have ingenuously told you, you may see who began this corruption. Let me assure you, Madam, that there are many free things which I have been guilty of as *reprisals* in which I would not have been the *aggressor*.

All that I shall further say on this head, Mr. Lovelace, is this: that as this vile double-faced wretch has probably been the cause of great mischief on both sides, and *still* continues, as you own, his wicked practices, I think it would be but just to have my friends apprised what a creature *he* is whom some of them encourage.

What you please, Madam, as to that—my service, as well as your brother's, is now almost over for him. The fellow has made a good hand of it. He does not intend to stay long in his place. He is now actually in treaty for an inn, which will do his business for life. I can tell you further, that he makes love to your sister's Betty: and that *by my advice*. They will be married when he is established. An innkeeper's wife is every man's mistress; and I have a scheme in my head to set some engines at work to make *her* repent her saucy behaviour to you to the last day of her life.

What a wicked schemer are you, sir!—Who shall avenge upon you the still greater evils which you have been guilty of? I forgive Betty with all my heart. She was not my servant; and but too probably, in what she did, obeyed the commands of her to whom she owed duty, better than I obeyed those to whom I owed more.

No matter for that, the wretch said [*To be sure, my dear, he must design to make me afraid of him*]: The decree was gone out—Betty must smart—smart too by an act of her own choice. He loved, he said, to make bad people their own punishers.—Nay, Madam, excuse me; but if the fellow, if this Joseph, in *your* opinion, deserves punishment, mine is a complicated scheme; a man and his wife cannot well suffer separately, and it may come home to *him* too.

I had no patience with him. I told him so. I see, sir, said I, I see, what a man I am with. Your *rattle* warns me of the *snake*.—And away I flung: leaving him seemingly vexed, and in confusion.

—o—

LETTER XXXVII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

My plain dealing with Mr. Lovelace, on seeing him again, and the free dislike I expressed to his ways, his manners, and his contrivances, as well as to his speeches, have obliged him to recollect himself a little. He will have it, that the menaces which he threw out just now against my brother and Mr. Solmes, are only the effect of an unmeaning pleasantry. He has too great a stake in his country, he says, to be guilty of *such* enterprises as should lay him under a necessity of quitting it for ever. Twenty things, particularly, he says, he has suffered Joseph Leman to tell of him, that *were not*, and *could not* be true, in order to make himself formidable in some people's eyes, and this purely with a view to *prevent mischief*. He is unhappy, as far as he knows, in a quick invention; in hitting readily upon expedients; and many things are reported of him which he never said, and many which he never did, and others which he has only talked of (as just now), and which he has forgot as soon as the words have passed his lips.

This may be so, in part, my dear. No one man so young could be so wicked as he had been reported to be. But such a man at the head of such wretches as he is said to have at his beck, all men of fortune and fearlessness, and capable of such enterprises as I have unhappily found him capable of, what is not to be apprehended from him!

His carelessness about his character is one of his excuses: a very bad one. What hope can a woman have of a man who values not his reputation?—These gay wretches may, in

ed conversation, divert for an hour or so: but the man robity, the man of virtue, is the man that is to be the ner for life. What woman, who could help it, would nit it to the courtesy of a wretch who avows a disre- l to all moral sanctions, whether he will perform his : of the matrimonial obligation, and treat her with rable politeness?

Vith these notions, and with these reflections, to be wn upon such a man myself!—Would to Heaven— what avail wishes now?—To whom can I fly, if I ld fly from him?

—o—

LETTER XXXVIII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Friday, April 14.

EVER did I hear of such a parcel of foolish toads as e Harlowes!—Why, Belford, the lady must fall, if every of her head were a guardian angel, unless they were to e a visible appearance for her, or, snatching her from it unawares, would draw her after them into the starry ns.

ll I had to apprehend was, that a daughter so reluc- ly carried off, would offer terms to her father, and d be accepted upon a mutual *concedence; they* to give es; *she* to give up *me.* And so I was contriving to do could to guard against the latter. But they seem ved to perfect the work they have begun.

hat stupid creatures are there in the world! This sh brother not to know, that he who would be bribed ndertake a base thing by one, would be *over*-bribed to t the baseness; especially when he could be put into vay to serve himself by both!—Thou, Jack, wilt never v one half of my contrivances.

e here relates the conversation between him and the lady

(*upon the subject of the noise and exclamations his agent made at the garden door*) *to the same effect as in the lady's letter,* No. XXXVI., *and proceeds exulting:*

What a capacity for glorious mischief has thy friend!—Yet how near the truth all of it! The only deviation, my asserting that the fellow made the noises by *mistake,* and through *fright,* and not by *previous direction;* had she known the precise truth her anger, to be so taken in, would never have let her forgive me.

Had I been a military hero, I should have made gunpowder useless; for I should have blown up all my adversaries by dint of stratagem, turning their own devices upon them.

But these fathers and mothers—Lord help 'em!—Were not the powers of nature stronger than those of discretion, and were not that busy *dea bona* to afford her genial aids, till tardy prudence qualified parents to *manage* their future offspring, how few people would have children!

James and Arabella may have *their* motives; but what can be said for a father acting as *this* father has acted? What for a mother? What for an aunt? What for uncles?—Who can have patience with such fellows and fellowesses?

Soon will the fair one hear how high their foolish resentments run against her: and then will she, it is to be hoped, have a little more confidence in me. Then will I be jealous that she loves me not with the preference my heart builds upon: then will I bring her to confessions of grateful love: and then will I kiss her when I please; and not stand trembling, as now, like a hungry hound who sees a delicious morsel within his reach (the froth hanging about his vermillion jaws), yet dares not leap at it for his life.

But I was *originally* a bashful mortal. Indeed I am bashful still with regard to this lady.—Bashful, yet know the sex so well!—But that indeed is the *reason* that I know it so well:—For, Jack, I have had abundant cause, when I have looked into *myself,* by way of comparison with the *other* sex, to conclude that a bashful man has a good deal of the soul

f a woman; and so, like Tiresias, can tell what they think, nd what they drive at, as well as themselves.

The modest ones and I, particularly, are pretty much upon . par. The difference between us is only, what they *think*, *act*. But the immodest ones outdo the worst of us by a ıar's length, both in thinking and acting.

One argument let me plead in proof of my assertion; that :ven we rakes love modesty in a woman; while the modest women, as they are accounted (that is to say, the *slyest*), love, and generally prefer, an impudent man. Whence can this be, but from a likeness in nature? And this made the poet say that every woman is a rake in her heart. It concerns them, by their *actions*, to prove the contrary, if they can.

Thus have I read in some of the philosophers, *That no wickedness is comparable to the wickedness of a woman.** Canst thou tell me, Jack, who says this? Was it Socrates? for he had the devil of a wife—Or who? Or is it Solomon? —*King* Solomon—Thou rememberest to have read of such a king, dost thou not? SOL-O-MON, I learned, in my infant state [my mother was a good woman] to answer, when asked, *Who was the wisest man?*—But my indulgent questioner never asked me how he came by the uninspired part of his wisdom.

Come, come, Jack, you and I are not so very bad, could we but stop where we are.

He then gives the particulars of what passed between him and the lady on his menaces relating to her brother and Mr. Solmes, and of his design to punish Betty Barnes and Joseph Leman.

* Mr. Lovelace is as much out in his conjecture of Solomon, as of Socrates. The passage is in Ecclesiasticus, chap. xxv.

—o—

LETTER XXXIX.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Friday, Apr

I WILL now give you the particulars of a conversatio has just passed between Mr. Lovelace and me, which I call agreeable.

It began with his telling me that he had just receiv telligence that my friends were on a sudden come to a lution to lay aside all thoughts of pursuing me, or of g me back: and that therefore he attended me to kno pleasure; and what I would do, or have *him* do?

I told him that I would have him leave me directly that, when it was known to everybody that I was absol independent of him, it would pass that I had left my fa house because of my brother's ill usage of me: which plea that I might make with justice, and to the excuse c father, as well as of myself.

He mildly replied that if we could be certain tha relations would *adhere* to this their new resolution, he have no objection, since such was my pleasure; but was well assured that they had taken it only from a hensions that a more *active* one might involve my br (who had breathed nothing but revenge) in some fatal fortune, there was too much reason to believe that would resume their former purpose the moment they s think they *safely* might.

This, Madam, said he, is a risk I cannot run. would think it strange if I could. And yet, as soon knew they had so given out, I thought it proper to ap you of it, and to take your commands upon it.

Let me hear, said I (willing to try if he had any parti view), what *you* think most advisable?

'Tis very easy to say that, if I durst—*if I might not o you*—if it were not to *break conditions that shall be invio with me.*

Say then, sir, what you *would* say. I can approve or disapprove, as I think fit.

Had not the man a fine opportunity here to speak out?—He had. And thus he used it.

To wave, Madam, what I *would* say till I have more courage to speak out [*More courage,—Mr. Lovelace, more courage, my dear!*]—I will only propose what I think will be most agreeable to *you*—suppose, *if you choose not to go to Lady Betty's*, that you take a turn cross the country to Windsor?

Why to Windsor?

Because it is a pleasant place: because it lies in the way either to Berkshire, to Oxford, or to London: *Berkshire*, where Lord M. is at present: *Oxford*, in the neighbourhood of which lives Lady Betty: *London*, whither you may retire at your pleasure: or, if you will *have* it so, whither I may go, you staying at Windsor; and yet be within an easy distance of you, if anything should happen, or if your friends should change their new taken resolution.

This proposal, however, displeased me not. But I said my only objection was, the distance of Windsor from Miss Howe, of whom I should be glad to be always within two or three hours reach of by messenger, if possible.

If I had thoughts of any other place than Windsor, or nearer to Miss Howe, he wanted but my commands, and would seek for proper accommodations: but fix as I pleased, farther or nearer, he had servants, and they had nothing else to do but to obey me.

A grateful thing then he named to me—to send for my Hannah as soon as I shall be fixed;* unless I would choose one of the young gentlewomen *here* to attend me; both of whom, as I had acknowledged, were very obliging; and he knew I had generosity enough to make it worth their while.

This of Hannah, he might see, I took very well. I said I had thoughts of sending for her as soon as I got to more convenient lodgings. As to these young gentlewomen, it

* See his reasons for proposing Windsor, Letter XL.—and her Hannah, Letter XLI.

were pity to break in upon that usefulness which the whole family were of to each other; each having her proper part, and performing it with an agreeable alacrity: insomuch that I liked them all so well, that I could even pass my days among them, were he to leave me; by which means the lodgings would be more convenient to me than now they were.

He need not repeat his objections to this place, he said: but as to going to Windsor, or wherever else I thought fit, or as to his personal attendance, or leaving me, he would assure me (he very agreeably said) that I could propose nothing in which I thought my reputation, and even my *punctilio*, concerned, that he would not cheerfully come into. And since I was so much taken up with my pen, he would instantly order his horse to be got ready, and would set out.

Not to be off my caution. Have you any acquaintance at Windsor? said I.—Know you of any convenient lodgings there?

Except the forest, replied he, where I have often hunted, I know the least of Windsor of any place so noted and so pleasant. Indeed I have not a single acquaintance there.

Upon the whole, I told him that I thought his proposal of Windsor not amiss; and that I would remove thither, if a could get a lodging only for myself, and an upper chamber for Hannah; for that my stock of money was but small, as was easy to be conceived; and I should be very loth to be obliged to anybody. I added, that the sooner I removed the better; for that then he could have no objection to go to London, or Berkshire, as he pleased: and I should let everybody know my independence.

He again proposed himself, in very polite terms, for my banker. But I, as civilly, declined his offer.

This conversation was to be, all of it, in the main, agreeable. He asked whether I would choose to lodge in the town of Windsor, or out of it?

As near the castle, I said, as possible, for the convenience of going constantly to the public worship; an opportunity I had been long deprived of.

He should be very glad, he told me, if he could procure me accommodations in any one of the canon's houses; which he imagined would be more agreeable to me than any other, on many accounts. And as he could depend upon my promise, Never to have any other man but himself, on the condition to which he had so cheerfully subscribed, he should be easy; since it was now his part, *in earnest*, to set about recommending himself to my favour, by the *only* way he knew it would be done. Adding, with a very serious air—I am but a young man, Madam; but I have run a long course: let not your purity of mind incline you to despise me for the acknowledgment. It is high time to be weary of it, and to reform; since, like Solomon, I can say, There is nothing new under the sun: but that it is my belief that a life of virtue can afford such pleasures, on reflection, as will be for ever blooming, for ever new!

I was agreeably surprised. I looked at him, I believe, as if I doubted my ears and my eyes. His aspect, however, became his words.

I expressed my satisfaction in terms so agreeable to him, that he said he found a delight in this early dawning of a better day to him, and in *my* approbation, which he had never received from the success of the most favoured of his pursuits.

Surely, my dear, the man *must* be in earnest. He could not have *said* this, he could not have *thought* it, had he not. What followed made me still readier to believe him.

In the midst of my wild vagaries, said he, I have ever preserved a reverence for religion and for religious men. I always called another cause when any of my libertine companions, in pursuance of Lord Shaftesbury's test (which is part of the rake's creed, and what I may call *the whetstone of infidelity*), endeavoured to turn the sacred subject into ridicule. On this very account I have been called by good men of the clergy, who nevertheless would have it that I was a *practical* rake, *the decent rake:* and indeed I had too much pride in my shame, to disown the name of *rake.*

This, Madam, I am the readier to confess, as it may give

you hope that the generous task of my reformation, wh I flatter myself you will have the goodness to underta will not be so difficult a one as you may have imagined; it has afforded me some pleasure in my retired hours, wh a temporary remorse has struck me for anything I ha done amiss, that I should one day take delight in anoth course of life: for, unless we *can*, I daresay, no durable *go* is to be expected from the endeavour. Your examp Madam, must do all, must confirm all.*

The divine grace or favour, Mr. Lovelace, must do a and confirm all. You know not how much you please n that I can talk to you in this dialect.

And I then thought of his generosity to his pretty rusti and of his kindness to his tenants.

Yet, Madam, be pleased to remember one thing; refc mation cannot be a *sudden* work. I have infinite vivacit it is that which runs away with me. Judge, dearest Mada by what I am going to confess, that I have a prodigio way to journey on, before a good person will think r tolerable; since though I have read in some of our *perfe tionists* enough to make a better man than myself either n into madness or despair about the grace you mention, yet cannot enter into the meaning of the word, nor into t modus of its operation. Let me not then be checked wh I mention your example for my *visible* reliance; and inste of using such words, till I can better understand them, su pose all the rest included in the profession of that reliance

I told him that although I was somewhat concerned his expression, and surprised at so much *darkness*, as (I want of another word) I would call it, in a man of l talents and learning, yet I was pleased with his ingenuo ness. I wished him to encourage this way of thinking. told him that his observation, that no *durable* good was be expected from any new course, where there was r a delight taken in it, was just; but that the delight wo follow by use.

* That he proposes one day to reform, and that he has sometimes g motions, see vol. i. Letter XXXIV.

And twenty things of this sort I even preached to him; taking care, however, not to be tedious, nor to let my expanded heart give him a contracted or impatient blow. And, indeed, he took visible pleasure in what I said, and even hung upon the subject, when I, to try him, once or twice seemed ready to drop it: and proceeded to give me a most agreeable instance that he could at times think both deeply and seriously.—Thus it was.

He was once, he said, dangerously wounded in a duel in the left arm, baring it, to show me the scar: that this (notwithstanding a great effusion of blood, it being upon an artery) was followed by a violent fever, which at last fixed upon his spirits; and *that* so obstinately, that neither did *he* desire life, nor his *friends* expect it: that for a month together, his heart, as he thought, was so totally changed, that he despised his former courses, and particularly that rashness which had brought him to the state he was in, and his antagonist (who, however, was the aggressor) into a much worse: that in this space he had thoughts which at times still give him pleasure to reflect upon: and although these promising prospects changed as he recovered health and spirits, yet he parted with them with so much reluctance, that he could not help showing it in a copy of verses, *truly blank* ones, he said; some of which he repeated, and (advantaged by the grace which he gives to everything he repeats) I thought them very tolerable ones; the sentiments, however, much graver than I expected from him.

He has promised me a copy of the lines; and then I shall judge better of their merit; and so shall you. The tendency of them was, "That since sickness only gave him "a proper train of thinking, and that his restored health "brought with it a return of his evil habits, he was ready to "renounce the gifts of nature for those of contemplation."

He farther declared that although these good motions went off (as he had owned) on his recovery, yet he had better hopes now, from the influence of my example, and from the reward before him, if he persevered: and that he was the more hopeful that he should, as his present resolu-

tion was made in a full tide of health and spirits; and whe he had nothing to wish for but perseverance, to entitle hir self to my favour.

I will not throw cold water, Mr. Lovelace, said I, « a rising flame: but look to it! for I shall endeavour keep you up to this spirit. I shall measure your value me by this test: and I would have you bear those charr ing lines of Mr. Rowe for ever in your mind; you wl have, by your own confession, so much to repent of; ai as the scar, indeed, you showed me, will, in one instanc remind you to your dying day.

The lines, my dear, are from the poet's Ulysses; you ha heard me often admire them; and I repeated them to hir

> *Habitual* evils change not on a *sudden:*
> But many days must pass, and *many* sorrows;
> Conscious remorse and anguish *must* be felt,
> To curb desire, to break the stubborn will,
> And work a second nature in the soul,
> Ere Virtue can resume the place she lost:
> 'Tis else *dissimulation*—

He had often read these lines, he said; but never *tast* them before.—By his *soul* (the unmortified creature swor and as *he hoped to be saved*, he was *now* in earnest in l good resolutions. He had said, *before* I repeated those lir from Rowe, that habitual evils could not be changed « a *sudden:* but he hoped he should not be thought a *d sembler*, if he were not enabled to *hold* his good purpose since ingratitude and dissimulation were vices that of others he abhorred.

May you ever abhor them, said I. They are the m« odious of all vices.

I hope, my dear Miss Howe, I shall not have occasic in my future letters, to contradict these promising appe« ances. Should I have *nothing* on his side to combat wit I shall be very far from being happy, from the sense of n fault, and the indignation of all my relations. So shall n fail of condign punishment for it, from my inward remor on account of my forfeited character. But the least ray

hope could not dart in upon me, without my being willing to lay hold of the very first opportunity to communicate it to *you* who take so generous a share in all my concerns.

Nevertheless, you may depend upon it, my dear, that these agreeable assurances, and hopes of his begun reformation, shall not make me forget my caution. Not that I think, at worst, any more than you, that he dare to harbour a thought injurious to my honour: but he is very various, and there is an *apparent*, and even an *acknowledged* unfixedness in his temper, which at times gives me uneasiness. I am resolved therefore to keep him at distance from my person and my thoughts, as much as I can: for whether *all* men are or are not encroachers, I am sure Mr. Lovelace is one.

Hence it is that I have always cast about, and will continue to cast about, what ends he may have in view from *this* proposal, or from *that* report. In a word, though hopeful of the *best*, I will always be fearful of the *worst*, in everything that admits of doubt. For it is better, in such a situation as mine, to apprehend without cause, than to subject myself to surprise for want of forethought.

Mr. Lovelace is gone to Windsor, having left two servants to attend me. He purposes to be back to-morrow.

I have written to my aunt Hervey, to supplicate her interest in my behalf, for my clothes, books, and money; signifying to her, 'That if I may be restored to the favour 'of my family, and allowed a negative only, as to any man 'who may be proposed to me, and be used like a daughter, 'a niece, and a sister, I will stand by my offer to live 'single, and submit, as I ought, to a negative from my 'father.' Intimating, nevertheless, 'That it were perhaps 'better, after the usage I have received from my brother 'and sister, that I may be allowed to be distant from them, 'as well for their sakes as for my own' (meaning, as I suppose it will be taken, at my Dairy-house)—offering, 'to 'take my father's directions as to the manner I shall live 'in, the servants I shall have, and in everything that shall 'show the dutiful subordination to which I am willing 'to conform.'

My aunt will know by my letter to my sister how to direct to me, if she be permitted to favour me with a line.

I am equally earnest *with her* in *this* letter, as I was with my *sister* in *that* I wrote to *her*, to obtain for me a speedy reconciliation, that I may not be further precipitated; intimating, 'That by a timely lenity all may pass for a mis-'understanding only, which otherwise will be thought 'equally disgraceful to them, and to me; appealing to her 'for the necessity I was under to do what I did.'

Had I owned that I was overreached, and forced away against my intention, might they not, as a proof of the truth of my assertion, have insisted upon my immediate return to them? And if I did *not* return, would they not have reason to suppose that I had *now* altered my mind (if such were my mind), or had not the *power* to return?—Then were I to have gone back, must it not have been upon their own terms? *No conditioning with a father!* is a maxim with my father, and with my uncles. If I would have gone, Mr Lovelace would have opposed it. So I must have been under his control, or have run away *from* him, as it is supposed I did *to* him, from Harlowe Place. In what a giddy light would this have made me appear!—Had he constrained me, could I have appealed to my friends for *their* protection without risking the very consequences, to prevent which (setting up myself presumptuously, as a middle person between flaming spirits), I have run into such terrible inconveniences.

But, after all, must it not give me great anguish of mind to be forced to sanctify, as I may say, by my seeming *after* approbation, a measure I was so artfully tricked into, and which I was so much resolved not to take?

How one evil brings on another, is sorrowfully witnessed to by

Your ever obliged and affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER XL.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Friday, April 14.

THOU hast often reproached me, Jack, with my vanity, without distinguishing the humorous turn that accompanies it; and for which, at the same time that thou robbest me of the merit of it, thou admirest me highly. *Envy* gives thee the *indistinction: Nature* inspires the *admiration:* unknown to thyself it inspires it. But thou art too clumsy and too short-sighted a mortal, to know how to account even for the impulses by which thou thyself art moved.

Well, but this acquits thee not of my charge of vanity, Lovelace, methinks thou sayest.

And true thou sayest: for I have indeed a confounded parcel of it. But if men of parts may not be allowed to be vain, who should! and yet, upon second thoughts, men of parts have the least occasion of any to be vain; since the world (so few of *them* are there in it) are ready to find them out, and extol them. If a fool can be made sensible that there is a man who has more understanding than *himself*, he is ready enough to conclude that such a man must be a very extraordinary creature.

And what, at this rate, is the general conclusion to be drawn from the premises?—Is it not, That *no* man ought to be vain? But what if a man can't help it!—This, perhaps, may be *my* case. But there is nothing upon which I value myself so much as upon my *inventions*. And for the soul of me, I cannot help letting it be seen that I *do*. Yet this vanity may be a means, perhaps, to overthrow me with this sagacious lady.

She is very apprehensive of me I see. I have studied before her and Miss Howe, as often as I have been with them, to pass for a giddy thoughtless creature. What a folly then to be so *expatiatingly* sincere, in my answer to her home-put upon the noises within the garden?—But

such success having attended that contrivance [success, Ja has blown many a man up!] my cursed *vanity* got upp most, and kept down my *caution*. The menace to h secreted Solmes, and that other, that I had thoughts to away with her foolish brother, and of my project to reve her upon the two servants, so much terrified the d creature, that I was forced to sit down to muse after mea to put myself right in her opinion.

Some favourable incidents, at the time, tumbled in fro my agent in her family; at least such as I was determin to *make* favourable: and therefore I desired admittanc and this before she could resolve anything against m that is to say, while her admiration of my intrepidity ke resolution in suspense.

Accordingly, I prepared myself to be all gentleness, obligingness, all serenity; and as I have now and then, a always *had*, more or less, good motions pop up in my min I encouraged and collected everything of this sort that I h ever had from novicehood to maturity [*not long in recolle ing, Jack*], in order to bring the dear creature into go humour with me.* And who knows, thought I, if I c hold it, and proceed, but I may be able to lay a foundati fit to build my grand scheme upon!—LOVE, thought I, not *naturally* a doubter: FEAR is, I will try to banish t latter: nothing then but love will remain. CREDULITY is t God of Love's *prime minister*; and they never are asunde

He then acquaints his friend with what passed between and the lady, in relation to his advices from Harl Place, and to his proposal about lodgings, pretty muc the same purpose as in her preceding letter.

When he comes to mention his proposal of the Win lodgings, thus he expresses himself:

Now, Belford, can it enter into thy leaden head, w

* He had said, Letter XXXIII., that he would make reformation his s ing horse, &c.

I meant by this proposal!—I know it cannot. And so I'll tell thee.

To leave her for a day or two, with a view *to serve her by my absence*, would, as I thought, look like confiding in her favour. I could not think of leaving her, thou knowest, while I had reason to believe her friends would pursue us; and I began to apprehend that she would suspect that I made a pretence of that intentional pursuit to keep about her and with her. But now that they had declared against it, and that they would *not* receive her if she went back (a declaration she had better hear first from me, than from Miss Howe, or any other), what should hinder me from giving her this mark of my obedience; especially as I could leave Will, who is a clever fellow, and can do anything but write and spell, and Lord M.'s Jonas (not as guards, to be sure, but as attendants only); the latter to be despatched to me occasionally by the former, whom I could acquaint with my motions?

Then I wanted to inform myself why I had not congratulatory letters from Lady Sarah and Lady Betty, and from my cousins Montague, to whom I had written, glorying in my beloved's escape; which letters, if properly worded, might be made necessary to show her as matters proceed.

As to Windsor, I had no design to carry her particularly thither: but somewhere it was proper to name, as she condescended to ask my advice about it. London, I durst not, but very cautiously; and so as to make it her own option: for I must tell thee that there is such a perverseness in the sex, that when they ask your advice they do it only to know your opinion, that they may oppose it; though, had not the thing in question been *your* choice, perhaps it had been *theirs*.

I could easily give reasons *against* Windsor, after I had pretended to be there; and this would have looked the better, as it was a place of my own nomination; and shown her that I had no fixed scheme. Never was there in woman such a sagacious, such an all-alive apprehension,

as in this. Yet it is a grievous thing to an honest man t be suspected.

Then, in my going or return, I can call upon Mr Greme. She and my beloved had a great deal of tal together. If I knew what it was about; and that *either* upon their first acquaintance, was for benefiting herself b the *other;* I might contrive to serve them *both*, withou hurting *myself:* for these are the most prudent ways o doing friendships, and what are not followed by regrets though the *served* should prove ungrateful. Then Mrs Greme corresponds by pen-and-ink with her farmer-sister where we are: something may possibly arise *that* way either of a convenient nature, *which I may pursue;* o of an inconvenient nature, *which I may avoid.*

Always be careful of back doors, is a maxim with me i all my exploits. Whoever knows me, knows that I am n proud man. I can talk as familiarly to servants as to prin cipals, when I have a mind to make it worth their while t oblige me in anything. Then servants are but as the com mon soldiers in an army, they do all the mischief frequentl without malice, and merely, *good souls!* for mischief-sake.

I am most apprehensive about Miss Howe. She has confounded deal of wit, and wants only a subject, t show as much roguery: and should I be outwitted wit all my sententious boasting conceit of my own *nostrum mongership*—[*I love to plague thee, who art a pretende to accuracy,* and a surface-skimmer *in learning, with* out o the way *words and phrases*] I should certainly hang, drown or shoot myself.

Poor Hickman! I pity him for the prospect he h with such a virago! But the fellow's a fool, God wot And now I think of it, it is absolutely necessary for com plete happiness in the married state, that one *should* be fool [an argument I once held with this very Miss Howe But then the fool should know the other's superiority otherwise the obstinate one will disappoint the wise one.

But my agent Joseph has helped me to secure this quart as I have hinted to thee more than once.

LETTER XLI.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

[In continuation.]

But is it not a confounded thing that I cannot fasten an obligation upon this proud beauty? I have two motives in endeavouring to prevail upon her to accept of money and raiment from me: one, the real pleasure I should have in the accommodating of the haughty maid; and to think there was something near her, and upon her, that I could call *mine:* the other, in order to abate her severity and humble her a little.

Nothing more effectually brings down a proud spirit than a sense of lying under pecuniary obligations. This has always made me solicitous to avoid laying myself under any such: yet sometimes, formerly, have I been put to it, and cursed the tardy resolution of the quarterly periods. And yet I ever made shift to avoid anticipations: *I never would eat the calf in the cow's belly,* as Lord M.'s phrase is: for what is that but to hold our lands upon *tenant-courtesy,* the vilest of all tenures? To be denied a fox-chace, for breaking down a fence upon my own grounds? To be clamoured at for repairs *studied* for, rather than really *wanted?* To be prated to by a bumpkin with his hat on, and his arms folded, as if he defied your expectations of that sort; his foot firmly fixed, as if upon his own ground, and you forced to take his arch leers, and stupid gibes; he intimating, by the whole of his conduct, that he had had it in his power to oblige you, and if you behave civilly, may oblige you again? I, who think I have a right to break every man's head I pass by, if I like not his looks, to bear this!—No more could I do it, than I could borrow of an insolent uncle, or inquisitive aunt, who would thence think themselves entitled to have an account of all my life and actions laid before them for their review and censure.

My charmer, I see, has a pride like my own: but she has no *distinction* in her pride: nor knows the pretty fool that there is nothing nobler, nothing more delightful, than for lovers to be conferring and receiving obligations from each other. In this very farmyard, to give thee a familiar instance, I have more than once seen this remark illustrated. A strutting rascal of a cock have I beheld chuck, chuck, chuck, chuck-ing his mistress to him, when he has found a single barley-corn, taking it up with his bill, and letting it drop five or six times, still repeating his chucking invitation: and when two or three of his feathered ladies strive who shall be the first for it [*O Jack! a cock is a grand signor of a bird!*], he directs the bill of the foremost to it; and when she has got the dirty pearl, he struts over her with an erected crest, and with an exulting chuck—a chuck-aw-aw-w, circling round her with dropt wings, sweeping the dust in humble courtship: while the obliged she, half-shy, half-willing, by her cowering tail, prepared wings, yet seemingly affrighted eyes, and contracted neck, lets one see that she knows the barley-corn was not all he called her for.

When he comes to that part of his narrative, where he mentions the proposing of the lady's maid Hannah, *or one of the young Sorlings, to attend her, thus he writes:*

Now, Belford, canst thou imagine what I meant by proposing Hannah, or one of the girls here, for her attendant? I'll give thee a month to guess.

Thou wilt not pretend to guess, thou say'st.

Well, then, I'll tell thee.

Believing she would certainly propose to have that favourite wench about her as soon as she was a little settled, I had caused the girl to be inquired after, with an intent to make interest, somehow or other, that a month's warning should be insisted on by her master or mistress, or by some other means, which I had not determined upon, to prevent her coming to her. But fortune fights for me. The wench is luckily ill; a violent rheumatic disorder, which

; obliged her to leave her place, confines her to her
amber. Poor Hannah! How I pity the girl! These
ngs are very hard upon industrious servants!—I intend
make the poor wench a small present on the occasion—I
ow it will oblige my charmer.

And so, Jack, *pretending not to know anything of the
atter,* I pressed her to send for Hannah. She knew I had
vays a regard for this servant, because of her honest love
her lady: but now I have greater regard for her than
er. Calamity, though a poor servant's calamity, will
ther increase than diminish good will, with a truly
nerous master or mistress.

As to one of the young Sorlings's attendance, there was
othing at all in proposing that; for if either of them had
een chosen by *her,* and permitted by the *mother* [*two
hances in that!*], it would have been only till I had fixed
pon another. And if afterwards they had been loth to
part, I could easily have given my beloved a jealousy
which would have done the business; or to the girl, who
would have quitted her *country dairy,* such a relish for a
London one, as would have made it very convenient for her
o fall in love with Will; or perhaps I could have done still
etter for her with Lord M.'s chaplain, who is very desirous
standing well with his lord's presumptive heir.

A blessing on thy honest heart, Lovelace! thou'lt say;
thou art for providing for everybody!

*gives an account of the serious part of their conversation,
ith no great variation from the lady's account of it: and
en he comes to that part of it, where he bids her
ember that reformation cannot be a sudden thing, he
his friend:*

ot this fair play? Is it not dealing ingenuously?
e observation, I will be bold to say, is founded in
d *nature.* But there was a little touch of *policy* in
s; that the lady, if I should fly out again, should
me too gross a hypocrite: for, as I plainly told

her, I was afraid that my fits of reformation were *but* fi and sallies; but I hoped her example would fix them int habits. But it is so discouraging a thing to have my moni tress so very good!—I protest I know not how to look u at her! Now, as I am thinking, if I could pull her down a little nearer to my own level; that is to say, could prevai upon her to do something that would argue *imperfection* something *to repent of;* we should jog on much mor equally, and be better able to comprehend one another and so the comfort would be mutual, and the remorse no all on one side.

He acknowledges that he was greatly affected and pleased with the lady's serious arguments at the time: but even then *was apprehensive that his temper would not hold Thus he writes:*

This lady says serious things in so agreeable a manner (and then her voice is all harmony when she touches a subject she is pleased with), that I could have listened to her for half a day together. But yet I am afraid if she *falls,* as they call it, she will lose a good deal of that *pathos,* of that noble self-confidence, which gives a good person, as I now see, a visible superiority over one *not* so good.

But after all, Belford, I would fain know why people call such free livers as you and me *hypocrites.*—That's a word I hate; and should take it very ill to be called by it. For myself, I have as good motions, and perhaps have them as frequently as anybody: all the business is, they don't hold; or, to speak more in character, *I don't take the care some do to conceal my lapses.*

—o—

LETTER XLII.

Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

Saturday, April 15.

THOUGH pretty much pressed in time, and oppressed by my mother's watchfulness, I will write a few lines upon the

new light that has broken in upon your gentleman; and send it by a particular hand.

I know not what to think of him upon it. He talks well; but judge him by Rowe's lines, he is certainly a *dissembler*, odious as the sin of hypocrisy, and, as he says, that other of ingratitude, are to him.

And pray, my dear, let me ask, could he have triumphed, as it is said he has done, over so many of our sex, had he not been egregiously guilty of *both* sins?

His ingenuousness is the thing that staggers me: yet is he cunning enough to know that whoever accuses himself first, blunts the edge of an adversary's accusation.

He is certainly a man of sense: there is more hope of such a one than a fool: and there must be a *beginning* to a reformation. These I will allow in his favour.

But this that follows, I think, is the only way to judge of his specious confessions and self-accusations.—Does he confess anything that you knew not before, or that you are not likely to find out from others?—If nothing else, what does he confess to his own disadvantage? You have heard of his duels: you have heard of his seductions.—All the world has. He *owns*, therefore, what it would be to no purpose to *conceal*; and his ingenuousness is a salvo—'Why, this, Madam, is no more than Mr. Lovelace *himself* 'acknowledges.'

Well, but what is now to be done?—You must make the best of your situation: and as you say, so say I, I hope that will not be bad: for I like all that he has proposed to you of Windsor, and his canon's house. His readiness to leave you, and go himself in quest of a lodging, likewise looks well. And I think there is nothing can be so properly done, as (whether you get to a canon's house or not) that the canon should join you together in wedlock as soon as possible.

I much approve, however, of all your cautions, of all your vigilance, and of everything you have done, but of your *meeting him*. Yet in my disapprobation of that, I judge by the *event* only: for who would have divined it would have concluded as it did? But he is the devil by his own

account: and had he run away with the wretched Solmes, and your more wretched brother, and himself been transported for life, he should have had my free consent for all three.

What use does he make of that Joseph Leman!—His ingenuousness, I must once more say, confounds me; but if, my dear, you can forgive your brother for the part he put that fellow upon acting, I don't know whether you ought to be angry at Lovelace. Yet I have wished fifty times, since Lovelace got you away, that you were rid of him, whether it were by a burning fever, by hanging, by drowning, or by a broken neck; provided it were before he laid you under a necessity to go into mourning for him.

I repeat my hitherto rejected offer. May I send it safely by your old man? I have reasons for not sending it by Hickman's servant; unless I had a bank note. Inquiring for such may cause distrust. My mother is so busy, so inquisitive—I don't love suspicious tempers.

And here she is continually in and out—I must break off.

MR. HICKMAN begs his most respectful compliments to you, with offer of his services. I told him I would oblige him, because minds in trouble take kindly anybody's civilities: but that he was not to imagine that he particularly obliged me by this; since I should think the man or woman either blind or stupid who admired not a person of your exalted merit for your own sake, and wished not to serve you without view to other reward than the honour of serving you.

To be sure that was his principal motive, with great daintiness he said it: but with a kiss of his hand, and a bow to my feet, he hoped that a fine lady's being *my friend* did not lessen the merit of the reverence he really had for her.

Believe me ever, what you, my dear, shall ever find me,

Your faithful and affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER XLIII

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Saturday Afternoon.

I DETAIN your messenger while I write an answer to yours; the poor old man not being very well.

You dishearten me a good deal about Mr. Lovelace. I may be too willing from my sad circumstances to think the best of him. If his pretences to reformation are *but* pretences, what must be his intent? But can the heart of man be so very vile? Can he, *dare* he, mock the Almighty? But may I not, from one very sad reflection, think better of him; that I am thrown too much into his power to make it *necessary* for him (except he were to intend the *very utmost* villany by me) to be such a shocking hypocrite? He must, at least, be in earnest at the *time* he gives the better hopes. Surely he must. You yourself must join with me in this hope, or you could not wish me to be so dreadfully yoked.

But after all, I had rather, much rather, be independent of him and of his family, although I have a high opinion of them; at least till I see what my own may be brought to.—Otherwise, I think it were best for me at once to cast myself into Lady Betty's protection. All would then be conducted with decency, and perhaps many mortifications would be spared me. But then I must be *his* at all adventures, and be thought to defy my own family. And shall I not first see the issue of *one* application? And yet I cannot make this till I am settled somewhere, and at a distance from him.

Mrs. Sorlings showed me a letter this morning, which she had received from her sister Greme last night; in which Mrs. Greme (hoping I would forgive her forward zeal if her sister thinks fit to show her letter to me) 'wishes (and that 'for all the noble family's sake, and she hopes she may say 'for my own) that I will be pleased to yield to make his

'honour, as she calls him, happy.' She grounds her *officiou ness*, as she calls it, upon what he was so *condescending* [h word also] to say to her yesterday, in his way to Winds on her *presuming* to ask if she might soon give him jo 'That no man ever loved a woman as he loves me: that 'woman ever so well deserved to be beloved: that in eve 'conversation he admires me still more: that he loves 'with such a purity as he had never believed himself capab 'of, or that a mortal creature could have inspired him witl 'looking upon me as all *soul;* as an angel sent down 'save *his;*' and a great deal more of this sort: 'but that 'apprehends my consent to make him happy is at a great 'distance than he wishes; and complained of too seve 'restrictions I had laid upon him before I honoured hi 'with my *confidence:* which restrictions *must be as sacr 'to him, as if they were parts of the marriage contract,*' &c

What, my dear, shall I say to this? How shall I take it Mrs. Greme is a good woman. Mrs. Sorlings is a goo woman. And this letter agrees with the conversatio between Mr. Lovelace and me, which I thought, and sti think, so agreeable.* Yet what means the man by *for going the opportunities he has had to declare himself?*—Wh mean his *complaints of my restrictions* to Mrs. Greme? H is not a bashful man.—But you say I inspire people with a awe of me.—An awe, my dear!—As how?

I am quite petulant, fretful, and peevish with myself times, to find that I am bound to see the workings of th *subtle*, or this *giddy* spirit, which shall I call it?

How am I punished, as I frequently think, for my vani in hoping to be an *example* to young persons of my se Let me be but a *warning*, and I will now be contente For, be my destiny what it may, I shall never be able t hold up my head again among my best friends and worthie companions.

It is one of the cruellest circumstances that attends tl faults of the inconsiderate, that she makes all who love h

* This letter Mrs. Greme (with no bad design on her part) was put up writing by Mr. Lovelace himself, as will be seen in Letter L.

unhappy, and gives joy only to her own enemies, and to the enemies of her family.

What a useful lesson would this afford were it properly inculcated at the time that the *tempted mind* was balancing upon a doubtful adventure?

You know not, my dear, the worth of a virtuous man; and noble-minded as you are in most particulars, you partake of the common weakness of human nature, in being apt to slight what is in your own power.

You would not think of using Mr. Lovelace, were he your suitor, as you do the much worthier Mr. Hickman—would you?—You know who says in my mother's case, 'Much *will* bear, much *shall* bear, all the world through.'* Mr. Hickman, I fancy, would be glad to know the lady's name who made such an observation. He would think it hardly possible but such a one should benefit by her own remark; and would be apt to wish his Miss Howe acquainted with her.

Gentleness of heart, surely, is not despicable in a man. Why, if it be, is the highest distinction a man can arrive at, that of a *gentleman*?—A distinction which a prince may not deserve. For manners, more than birth, fortune, or title, are requisite in this character. Manners are indeed the essence of it. And shall it be generally said, and Miss Howe not be an exception to it (as once you wrote), that our sex are best dealt with by boisterous and unruly spirits? †

Forgive me, my dear, and love me as you used to do. For although my fortunes are changed, my heart is not: nor ever will, while it bids my pen tell you that it must cease to beat, when it is not as much yours as

Your

CL. HARLOWE.

* See vol. i. Letter X.

† See vol. i. Letter XLVII.

LETTER XLIV.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Saturday Evening.

MR. LOVELACE has seen divers apartments at Windsor; but not one, he says, that he thought fit for me, and which, at the same time, answered my description.

He has been very solicitous to keep to the letter of my instructions: which looks well: and the better I like him, as although he proposed that town, he came back dissuading me from it: for he said that in his journey from thence, he had thought Windsor, although of his own proposal, a wrong choice; because I coveted privacy, and that was a place generally visited and admired.*

I told him that if Mrs. Sorlings thought me not an incumbrance, I would be willing to stay here a little longer; provided he would leave me and go to Lord M.'s, or to London, whichever he thought best.

He hoped, he said, that he might suppose me absolutely safe from the insults or attempts of my brother; and therefore if it should make me easier, he would obey, for a few days at least.

He again proposed to send for Hannah, I told him I designed to do so, through you—And shall I beg of you, my dear, to cause the honest creature to be sent to? Your faithful Robert, I think, knows where she is. Perhaps she will be permitted to quit her place directly, by allowing a month's wages, which I will repay her. He took notice of the serious humour he found me in, and of the redness of my eyes. I had just been answering your letter; and had he not approached me, on his coming off his journey, in a very respectful manner; had he not made an unexceptionable report of his inquiries, and been so ready to go from me, at the very first word; I was prepared (not-

* This inference of the lady in his favour is exactly what he had hoped for. See Letter XL. of this volume.

withstanding the good terms we parted upon when he set out for Windsor) to have given him a very unwelcome reception: for the contents of your last letter had so affected me, that the moment I saw him, I beheld with indignation the seducer who had been the cause of all the evils I suffer, and have suffered.

He hinted to me that he had received a letter from Lady Betty, and another (as I understood him) from one of the Miss Montagues. If they take notice of *me* in them, I wonder that he did not acquaint me with the contents. I am afraid, my dear, that his relations are among those who think I have taken a rash and inexcusable step. It is not to my *credit* to let *even them* know how I have been *frighted out of myself:* and yet perhaps they would hold me unworthy of their alliance, if they were to think my flight a voluntary one. Oh, my dear, how uneasy to us are our reflections upon every doubtful occurrence, when we know we have been prevailed upon to do a wrong thing!

—o—

Sunday Morning.

Ah! this man, my dear! We have had warmer dialogues than ever yet we have had. At fair argument, I find I need not fear him;* but he is such a wild, such an ungovernable creature [*he* reformed!], that I am half afraid of him.

He again, on my declaring myself uneasy at his stay with me here, proposed that I would put myself into Lady Betty's protection; assuring me that he thought he could not leave me at Mrs. Sorlings's with safety to myself. And upon my declining to do that, for the reasons I gave you in my last,† he urged me to make a demand of my estate.

He knew it, I told him, to be my resolution not to litigate with my father.

Nor would he put me upon it, he replied, but as the *last* thing. But if my spirit would not permit me to be

* See this confirmed by Mr. Lovelace, Letter XXVI. of this volume.

† See Letter XLIII. of this volume.

obliged, as I called it, to anybody, and yet if my relation would refuse me my own, he knew not how I could keep up that spirit, without being put to inconveniences which would give him infinite concern—unless—unless—unless, he said, hesitating, as if afraid to speak out—unless I would take the only method I *could* take, to obtain the possession of my own.

What is *that*, sir?

Sure the man saw by my looks, when he came with his creeping *unlesses*, that I guessed what he meant.

Ah! Madam, can you be at a loss to know what that method is?—They will not dispute with a *man* that right which they would contest with *you*.

Why said he with a *man*, instead of with him? Yet he looked as if he wanted to be encouraged to say more.

So, sir, you would have me employ a lawyer, would you, notwithstanding what I have ever declared as to litigating with my father?

No, I would not, my dearest creature, snatching my hand, and pressing it with his lips—except you would make *me* the lawyer.

Had he said *me* at first, I should have been above the affectation of mentioning a lawyer.

I blushed. The man pursued not the subject so ardently but that it was more easy as well as more natural to avoid it than to fall into it.

Would to Heaven he might, without offending!—But so over-awed him!—[*over-awed* him!—*Your** notion, my dear!]—And so the over-awed, bashful man went off from the subject, repeating his proposal that I would demand my own estate, or empower some man of the law to demand it, if I *would not* [he put in] empower a happier man to demand it. But it could not be amiss, he thought, to acquaint my two trustees that I intended to assume it.

I should know better what to do, I told him, when he was at a distance from me, and *known* to be so. I suppose, sir, that if my father propose my return, and engage new

* See Letter XXXIV. of this volume.

to mention Solmes to me, nor any other man, but by *my consent*, and I agree, upon that condition, to think no more of *you*, you will acquiesce.

I was willing to try whether he had the regard to *all* my previous declarations, which he pretended to have to *some* of them.

He was struck all of a heap.

What say you, Mr. Lovelace? You know, all you mean is for my good. Surely I am my own mistress: surely I need not ask your leave to make what terms I please for myself, *so long as I break none with you!*

He hemm'd twice or thrice—Why, Madam—why, Madam, I cannot say—then pausing—and rising from his seat with petulance; I see plainly enough, said he, the reason why none of my proposals can be accepted: at *last* I am to be a sacrifice to your reconciliation with your implacable family.

It has always been your respectful way, Mr. Lovelace, to treat my family in this free manner. But pray, sir, when you call *others* implacable, see that you deserve not the same censure *yourself*.

He must needs say there was no love lost between some of my family and him; but he had not deserved of *them* what they had of *him*.

Yourself being judge, I suppose, sir?

All the world, you yourself, Madam, being judge.

Then, sir, let me tell you, had you been less upon your defiances, they would not have been irritated so much against you. But nobody ever heard that avowed despite to the relations of a person was a proper courtship either to that person or to her friends.

Well, Madam, all that I know is, that their malice against me is such, that, if you determine to sacrifice *me*, you may be reconciled when you please.

And all that I know, sir, is, that if I do give my father the power of a negative, and he will be contented with *that*, it will be but my *duty* to give it him; and if I preserve one to myself, I shall break through no obligation to *you*.

Your duty to your capricious *brother*, not to your *father*, you mean, Madam.

If the dispute lay between my brother and me at *first*, surely, sir, a father may choose which party he will take.

He *may*, Madam—but that exempts him not from blame for all that, if he take the wrong——

Different people will judge differently, Mr. Lovelace, of the right and the wrong. *You* judge as you please. Shall not others as *they* please? And who has a right to control a father's judgment in his own family, and in relation to his own child?

I know, Madam, there is no arguing with you. But, nevertheless, I had hoped to have made myself some little merit with you, so as that I might not have been the *preliminary sacrifice* to a reconciliation.

Your hope, sir, had been better grounded if you had had my consent to my abandoning of my father's house——

Always, Madam, and for ever, to be reminded of the choice you would have made of that damned Solmes—rather than——

Not so hasty! not so rash, Mr. Lovelace! I am convinced that there was no intention to marry me to that Solmes on Wednesday.

So I am told they now give out, in order to justify themselves at your expense. Everybody living, Madam, is obliged to you for your kind thoughts but I.

Excuse me, *good* Mr. Lovelace [waving my hand, and bowing], that I am willing to think the best of my father.

Charming creature! said he, with what a bewitching air is that said!—And with a vehemence in his manner would have snatched my hand. But I withdrew it, being much offended with him.

I think, Madam, my sufferings for your sake might have entitled me to some favour.

My sufferings, sir, for your impetuous temper, set against *your* sufferings for *my sake*, I humbly conceive, leave me very little your debtor.

Lord! Madam [assuming a drawling air], what have

you suffered?—Nothing but what you can easily forgive. You have been *only* made a prisoner in your father's house, by the way of doing credit to your judgment!—You have *only* had an innocent and faithful servant turned out of your service, because you loved her!—You have *only* had your sister's confident servant set over you, with leave to tease and affront you!——

Very well, sir!—

You have *only* had an insolent brother take upon him to treat you like a slave, and as insolent a sister to undermine you in everybody's favour, on pretence to keep you out of hands, which, if as vile as they vilely report, are not, however, half so vile and cruel as their own!

Go on, sir, if you please.

You have *only* been persecuted, in order to oblige you to have a sordid fellow, whom you have professed to hate, and whom everybody despises! The license has been *only* got! The parson has *only* been had in readiness! The day, a near, a *very* near day, has been *only* fixed! And you were *only* to be searched for your correspondences, and still closer confined till the day came, in order to deprive you of all means of escaping the snare laid for you!—But all this you can forgive! You can wish you had stood all this; inevitable as the compulsion must have been!—And the man who, at the hazard of his life, has delivered you from all these mortifications, is the only person you *cannot* forgive!

Can't you go on, sir? You see I have patience to hear you. Can't you go on, sir?

I can, Madam, with *my* sufferings: which I confess ought not to be mentioned, were I at last to be rewarded in the manner I hoped.

Your sufferings then, if you please, sir?

Affrontingly forbidden your father's house after encouragement given, without any reasons they knew not before to justify the prohibition: forced upon a rencounter I wished to avoid: the first I ever, so provoked, wished to avoid. And that, because the wretch was your brother!

Wretch, sir!—And my brother!—This could be from no man breathing, but from him before me!

Pardon me, Madam!—But oh! how unworthy to be your brother!—The quarrel grafted upon an old one when at college; he universally known to be the aggressor; and revived for views equally sordid and injurious both to yourself and me—giving life to him who would have taken away mine!

Your *generosity* THIS, sir; not your *sufferings*; a little more of your *sufferings*, if you please!—I hope you do not repent that you did not murder my brother!

My private life hunted into! My morals decried! Some of the accusers not unfaulty!

That's an aspersion, sir!

Spies set upon my conduct! One hired to bribe my own servant's fidelity; perhaps to have poisoned me at last, if the honest fellow had not——

Facts, Mr. Lovelace!—Do you want facts in the display of your sufferings?—None of your *perhapses*, I beseech you!

Menaces every day, and defiances put into every one's mouth against me! Forced to creep about in disguises—and to watch *all hours*——

And in *all weathers*, I suppose, sir—That, I remember, was once your grievance! *In all weathers*, sir!* and all these hardships arising from yourself, not imposed by me.

Like a thief, or an eavesdropper, proceeded he: and yet neither by birth nor alliances unworthy of *their* relation, whatever I may be and am of their admirable daughter: of whom they, every one of them, are at least *as* unworthy!—These, Madam, I call sufferings: *justly* call so; if at last I am to be sacrificed to an imperfect reconciliation—*imperfect*, I say: for can you expect to live so much as *tolerably* under the same roof, after all that has passed, with that brother and sister?

Oh, sir, sir! What sufferings have yours been!—And all for my sake, I warrant!—I can never reward you for them!—Never think of me more, I beseech you—How can you

* See Letter XXI. of this volume.

have patience with me?—Nothing has been owing to your own behaviour, I presume: nothing to your defiances for defiances: nothing to your resolution declared more than once, that you *would* be related to a family, which nevertheless you would not stoop to ask a relation of: nothing, in short, to courses which everybody blamed you for, you not thinking it worth your while to justify yourself. Had I not thought you used in an ungentlemanly manner, as I have heretofore told you, you had not had my notice by pen and ink *. That notice gave you a supposed security, and you generously defied my friends the more for it: and this brought upon me (perhaps not undeservedly) my father's displeasure; without which my brother's private pique and selfish views would have wanted a foundation to build upon: so that for all that followed of my treatment, and your redundant *onlys*, I might thank you principally, as you may yourself for all your *sufferings*, your *mighty* sufferings!—And if, voluble sir, you have founded any merit upon them, be so good as to revoke it: and look upon *me*, with my forfeited reputation, as the only sufferer.—For what—pray hear me out, sir [for he was going to speak],have you suffered in but your pride? Your reputation *could not* suffer: *that* it was beneath you to be solicitous about. And had you not been an unmanageable man, I should not have been driven to the extremity I now every hour, as the hour passes, deplore—with this additional reflection upon myself that I ought not to have *begun*, or, having begun, not *continued* a correspondence with one who thought it not worth his while to clear his own character for *my sake*, or to submit to my father for *his own*, in a point wherein every father ought to have an option—

Darkness, light; light, darkness; by my soul;—just as you please to have it. Oh, charmer of my heart! snatching my hand, and pressing it between both his, to his lips, in a strange wild way, take me, take me to yourself: mould me as you please: I am wax in your hands; give me your own impression; and seal me for ever yours—we were born for each

* See Letter XXI. of this volume.

other!—You to make me happy, and save a soul—I am a error, all crime. I see what I ought to have done. But d you think, Madam, I can willingly consent to be sacrifice to a partial reconciliation, in which I shall be so great, s irreparable a sufferer!—Anything but *that*—include me i your terms: prescribe to me: promise for me as you plea —put a halter about my neck, and lead me by it, upo condition of forgiveness on that disgraceful penance, an of a prostration as servile, to your father's presence (you brother absent), and I will beg his consent at his feet, an bear anything but spurning from him, because he is you father. But to give you up upon *cold* conditions, d—— me [said the shocking wretch] if I either will, or can!

These were his words, as near as I can remember them for his behaviour was so strangely wild and fervent, that was perfectly frighted. I thought he would have devoure my hand. I wished myself a thousand miles distant fro him.

I told him I by no means approved of his violent temper he was too boisterous a man for my liking. I saw *now*, b the conversation that had passed, what was his boaste regard to my *injunctions;* and should take my measure accordingly, as he should *soon* find. And with a half frighted earnestness, I desired him to withdraw and leav me to myself.

He obeyed; and that with extreme complaisance in hi manner, but with his complexion greatly heightened, and countenance as greatly dissatisfied.

But on recollecting all that passed, I plainly see that h means not, if he can help it, to leave me to the liberty o refusing him; which I had nevertheless preserved a *right* t do; but looks upon me as *his*, by a strange sort of obligation for having run away with me *against my will.*

Yet you see he but touches upon the edges of matrimony neither. And that at a time, generally, when he ha either excited one's passions or apprehensions; so that on cannot at once descend. But surely this cannot be hi design.—And yet such seemed to be his behaviour to m

sister,* when he provoked her to refuse him, and so tamely submitted, as he did, to her refusal. But he dare not—what can one say of so various a man?—I am now again out of conceit with him. I wish I were fairly out of his power.

He has sent up three times to beg admittance; in the two last with unusual earnestness. But I have sent him word I will first finish what I am about.

What to do about going from this place, I cannot tell. I could stay here with all my heart as I have said to him: the gentlewoman and her daughters are desirous that I will: although not very convenient for them, I believe, neither: but I see he will not leave me, while I do—so I *must* remove somewhere.

I have long been sick of myself: and now I am more and more so. But let me not lose your good opinion. If I do, that loss will complete the misfortunes of

Your

CL. HARLOWE.

—o—

LETTER XLV.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Sunday Night, April 16.

I MAY send to you, although you are forbid to write to me; may I not?—For that is not a *correspondence* (is it?) where letters are not answered.

I am strangely at a loss what to think of this man. He is a perfect Proteus. I can but write according to the shape he assumes at the time. Don't think *me* the changeable person, I beseech you, if in one letter I contradict what I wrote in another; nay, if I seem to contradict what I said in the same letter: for he is a perfect camelion; or rather more variable than the camelion; for that, it is said, cannot assume the *red* and the *white;* but this man *can.* And though *black* seems to be his natural colour, yet has he taken great pains to make me think him nothing but *white.*

* See vol. i. Letters II. and III.

But you shall judge of him as I proceed. Only, if I anywhere appear to you to be credulous, I beg you to set me right: for you are a stander-by, as you say in a former*— Would to Heaven I were not to play! for I think, after all, I am held to a desperate game.

Before I could finish my last to you, he sent up twice more to beg admittance. I returned for answer that I would see him at my own time: I would neither be invaded nor prescribed to.

Considering how we parted, and my delaying his *audience*, as he sometimes calls it, I expected him to be in no very good humour when I admitted of his visit; and by what I wrote, you will conclude that *I* was not. Yet mine soon changed when I saw his extreme humility at his entrance, and heard what he had to say.

I have a letter, Madam, said he, from Lady Betty Lawrance, and another from my cousin Charlotte. But of these more by and by. I came now to make my humble acknowledgment to you upon the arguments that passed between us so lately.

I was silent, wondering what he was driving at.

I am a most unhappy creature, proceeded he: unhappy from a strange impatiency of spirit which I cannot conquer. It always brings upon me deserved humiliation. But it is more laudable to acknowledge, than to persevere when under the power of conviction.

I was still silent.

I have been considering what you proposed to me, Madam, that I should acquiesce with such terms as you should think proper to comply with, in order to a reconciliation with your friends.

Well, sir.

And I find all just, all right, on your side; and all impatience, all inconsideration, on mine.

I stared, you may suppose. Whence this change, sir? and so soon?

I am so much convinced that you must be in the right

* See Letter XXIII. of this volume.

in all you think fit to insist upon, that I shall for the future mistrust myself; and if it be possible, whenever I differ with you, take an hour's time for recollection before I give way to that vehemence which an opposition, to which I have not been accustomed, too often gives me.

All this is mighty good, sir. But to what does it tend?

Why, Madam, when I came to consider what you had proposed as to the terms of reconciliation with your friends; and when I recollected that you had always *referred to yourself* to *approve* or *reject* me, according to my *merits* or *demerits;* I plainly saw that it was rather a *condescension* in you, that you were pleased to ask my consent to those terms, than that you were imposing a *new law:* and I now, Madam, beg your pardon for my impatience: whatever terms you think proper to come into with your relations, which will enable you to honour me with the *conditional* effect of your promise to me, to these be pleased to consent: and if I lose you, insupportable as that thought is to me; yet, as it must be by my own fault, I ought to thank myself for it.

What think you, Miss Howe?—Do you believe he can have any view in this?—I cannot see any he could have, and I thought it best, as he put it in so right a manner, to appear not to doubt the sincerity of his confession, and to accept of it as sincere.

He then read to me part of Lady Betty's letter; turning down the beginning, which was a little too severe upon him, he said, for my eye: and I believe, by the style, the remainder of it was in a *corrective* strain.

It was too plain, I told him, that he must have great faults, that none of his relations could write to him, but with a mingled censure for some bad action.

And it is as plain, my dearest creature, said he, that you, who know not of any such faults, but by surmise, are equally ready to condemn me.—Will not charity allow you to infer that *their* charges are no better grounded?—And that my principal fault has been carelessness of my character, and too little solicitude to clear myself, when aspersed? Which, I do assure you, is the case.

Lady Betty, in her letter, expresses herself in obliging manner in relation to me. 'She wishes 'behave, as to encourage me to make him soc 'She desires her compliments to me; and exp 'impatience to see, as her niece, so *celebrated a la* 'are her high words]. She shall take it for an hc 'says, to be put into a way to oblige me. She ho 'not too long delay the ceremony; because that p 'will be to her, and to Lord M. and Lady Sar 'pledge of her nephew's merits and good behaviou

She says, 'she was always sorry to hear of the 'I had met with on his account: that he will be 'ungrateful of men, if he make not *all up* to me: 'she thinks it incumbent upon all their family to 'me the lost favour of my own: and for her par 'of that kind, she bids him assure me, shall be wa

Her ladyship observes, 'That the treatment he ha 'from my family would have been more unaccoun 'it was, with such natural and accidental advant 'had, had it not been owing to his own careless 'But she hopes that he will convince the Harlo 'that they had thought worse of him than he had 'since now it was in his power to establish his cha 'ever. This she prays to God to enable him to c 'for his own honour, as for the honour of their *h* the magnificent word.

She concludes, with 'desiring to be informe 'nuptials the moment they are celebrated, that sl 'with the earliest in felicitating me on the happy

But her Ladyship gives me no direct invitation her before the marriage: which I might have exp what he had told me.

He then showed me part of Miss Montag sprightly letter, 'congratulating him upon the h 'had obtained, of the *confidence of so admirabl* These are her words. *Confidence,* my dear! indeed, as you say, will believe otherwise, were t told the truth: and you see that Miss Montagu

his family, I suppose) think the step I have taken an *extraordinary* one. 'She also wishes for his speedy nuptials; and 'to see her new cousin at M. Hall: as do Lord M., she tells 'him, and her sister; and in general all the well-wishers of 'their family.

'Whenever this happy day shall be passed, she proposes, 'she says, to attend me, and to make one in my train to M. 'Hall, if his Lordship shall continue as ill of the gout as he 'is at present. But that, should he get better, he will him-'self attend me, she is sure, and conduct me thither; and 'afterwards quit either of his three seats to us, till we shall 'be settled to our mind.'

This young lady says nothing in excuse for not meeting me on the road, or St. Alban's, as he had made me expect she would: yet mentions *her having been indisposed.* Mr. Lovelace had also told me that Lord M. *was ill of the gout;* which Miss Montague's letter confirms.

But why did not the man show me these letters last night? Was he afraid of giving me too much pleasure?

LETTER XLVI.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

You may believe, my dear, that these letters put me in good humour with him. He saw it in my countenance, and congratulated himself upon it. Yet I cannot but repeat my wonder that I could not have the contents of them communicated to me last night.*

He then urged me to go directly to Lady Betty's, on the strength of her letter.

But how, said I, can I do that, were I even out of all hope of a reconciliation with my friends (which yet, however unlikely to be effected, is my duty to *attempt*), as her Ladyship has given me no particular invitation?

* The reader will see how Miss Howe accounts for this, in Letter L.

That, he was sure, was owing to her doubt that it w be accepted—else she had done it with the greatest ple in the world.

That doubt itself, I said, was enough to deter me: s her Ladyship, who knew so well the boundaries to th and the unfit, by her not expecting I would accept o invitation, had she given it, would have reason to think very forward if I had accepted it; and much more forw to go without it. Then, said I, I thank *you*, sir, I have clothes fit to go anywhere, or to be seen by anybody.

Oh, I was fit to appear in the drawing-room, were dress and jewels to be excused; and should make the n amiable [he must mean *extraordinary*] figure there. He astonished at the elegance of my dress. By what art he k not, but I appeared to such advantage, as if I had a diffe suit every day. Besides, his cousins Montague would su me with all I wanted for the present; and he would writ Miss Charlotte accordingly, if I would give him leave.

Do you think me the jay in the fable? said I. W you have me visit the owners of the borrowed dresses in t own clothes? Surely, Mr. Lovelace, you think I have ei a very low, or a very confident mind.

Would I choose to go to London (for a few days only order to furnish myself with clothes?

Not at your expense, sir, said I, in an angry tone.

I could not have appeared in earnest to him, in my pleasure at his artful contrivances to get me away, if I were occasionally to show my real fretfulness upon the desti condition to which he has reduced me. When people set wrong together, it is very difficult to avoid recrimination

He wished he knew but my mind—that should d him in his proposals, and it would be his delight to ob it, whatever it were.

My mind is that you, sir, should leave me out of ha how often must I tell you so?

If I were anywhere but here, he would obey me, he said insisted upon it. But if I would assert my right, that w be infinitely preferable, in his opinion, to any other me

but *one (which he durst only hint at)*: for then admitting his visits, or refusing them, as I pleased (granting a correspondence by letter only), it would appear to all the world, that what I had done was but in order to do myself justice.

How often, Mr. Lovelace, must I repeat that I will not litigate with my father? Do you think that my *unhappy circumstances* will alter my notions of my own duty so far as I shall be enabled to perform it? How can I obtain possession without litigation, and but by my trustees? One of them will be against me; the other is abroad. Then the remedy proposed by this measure, were I *disposed* to fall in with it, will require time to bring it to effect; and what I want is, *present* independence and your *immediate* absence.

Upon his soul, the wretch swore, he did not think it safe, for the reasons he had before given, to leave me here. He wished I would think of some place to which I should like to go. But he must take the liberty to say, that he hoped his behaviour had not been so exceptionable as to make me so *very* earnest for his absence in the interim: and the less, surely, as I was almost *eternally* shutting up myself from him; although he presumed to assure me, that he never went from me but with a corrected heart, and with strengthened resolutions of improving by my example.

Eternally shutting myself up from you! repeated I—I hope, sir, that you will not pretend to take it *amiss* that I expect to be uninvaded in my retirements. I hope you do not think me so weak a creature (novice as you have found me in a very capital instance) as to be fond of occasions to hear your fond speeches, especially as no *differing circumstances* require your over-frequent visits; nor that I am to be addressed to, as if I thought hourly professions *needful* to assure me of your honour.

He seemed a little disconcerted.

You know, Mr. Lovelace, proceeded I, why I am so earnest for your absence. It is that I may appear to the world independent of you; and in hopes, by that means, to find it less difficult to set on foot a reconciliation with my friends. And now let me add (in order to make you easier as to the

terms of that hoped-for reconciliation), that since I find have the good fortune to stand so well with your relations, will, from time to time, acquaint you by letter, when y are absent, with every step I shall take, and with every ove ture that shall be made to me: but not with an intention render myself accountable to you, either as to my accep ance or non-acceptance of those overtures. They know th I have a power given me by my grandfather's will, to b queath the estate he left me, with other of his bounties, in way that may affect them, though not absolutely from them This *consideration,* I hope, will procure me *some* from them when their passion subsides, and when they know I am ir dependent of you.

Charming reasoning!—And let him tell me, that th assurance I had given him was *all he wished for.* It wa *more* than he could ask. What a happiness to have a woma of honour and generosity to depend upon! Had he, on h first entrance into the world, met with such a one, he ha never been other than a man of strict virtue.—But all, h hoped, was for the best; since, in that case, he had neve perhaps had the happiness he had now in view; because h relations had been always urging him to marry; and tha before he had the honour to know me. And now, as he ha not been so bad as some people's malice reported him to b he hoped he should have near as much merit in his repen ance, as if he had never erred.—A fine rakish notion an hope! And too much encouraged, I doubt, my dear, by th generality of our sex!

This brought on a more serious question or two. You' see by it what a creature an unmortified libertine is.

I asked him if he knew what he had said, alluded to sentence in the best of books, *That there was more joy i heaven*——

He took the words out of my mouth,

*Over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety-and-nine ju persons, which need no repentance,** were his words.

* Luke xv. 7. The parable is concerning the Ninety-nine Sheep, not t Prodigal Son, as Mr. Lovelace erroneously imagines.

Yes, Madam, I thought of it, as soon as I said it, but not before. I have read the story of the Prodigal Son, I'll assure you; and one day, when I am settled as I hope to be, will write a dramatic piece on the subject. I have at times had it in my head; and you will be too ready, perhaps, to allow me to be qualified for it.

You so lately, sir, stumbled at a word, with which you must be better acquainted, ere you can be thoroughly master of such a subject, that I am amazed you should know anything of the Scripture, and be so ignorant of that.*

O Madam, I have read the Bible as a fine piece of ancient history—but as I hope to be saved, it has for some few years past made me so uneasy, when I have popped upon some passages in it, that I have been forced to run to music or company to divert myself.

Poor wretch! lifting up my hands and eyes.

The denunciations come so slap-dash upon one, so unceremoniously, as I may say, without even the by-your-leave of a rude London chairman, that they overturn one, horse and man, as St. Paul was overturned. There's another Scripture allusion, Madam! The light, in short, as his was, is too glaring to be borne.

Oh, sir, do you want to be complimented into repentance and salvation? But pray, Mr. Lovelace, do you mean anything at all when you swear so often as you do, *By your soul,* or bind an asseveration with the words, *As you hope to be saved?*

Oh, my beloved creature, shifting his seat; let us call another cause.

Why, sir, don't *I* neither use *ceremony* enough with you?

Dearest madam, forbear for the present: I am but in my noviciate. Your foundation must be laid brick by brick: you'll hinder the progress of the good work you would promote, if you tumble in a whole waggon-load at once upon me.

Lord bless me, thought I, what a character is that of a libertine! What a creature am I, who have risked what I

* See Letter XXXIX. of this volume.

have risked with such a one!—What a task before me, if my hopes continue of reforming such a wild Indian as this!—Nay, worse than a wild Indian; for a man who errs with his eyes open, and against conviction, is a thousand times worse for what he knows, and much harder to be reclaimed, than if he had never known anything at all.

I was equally shocked *at* him, and concerned *for* him; and having laid so few bricks (to speak to his allusion) and those so ill-cemented, I was as willing as the gay inconsiderate to call another cause, as he termed it—another cause, too, more immediately pressing upon me from my uncertain situation.

I said I took it for granted that he assented to the reasoning he seemed to approve, and would leave me. And then I asked him what he really, and in his most deliberate mind, would advise me to, in my present situation? He must needs see, I said, that I was at a great loss what to resolve upon; entirely a stranger to London, having no adviser, no protector, at present: himself, he must give me leave to tell him, greatly deficient in *practice*, if not in the *knowledge*, of those decorums which, I had supposed, were always to be found in a man of birth, fortune, and education.

He imagines himself, I find, to be a very polite man, and cannot bear to be thought otherwise. He put up his lip—I am sorry for it, Madam—a man of breeding, a man of politeness, give me leave to say [colouring], is much more of a black swan with *you*, than with any lady I ever met with.

Then that is your misfortune, Mr. Lovelace, as well as mine, at present. Every woman of discernment, I am confident, knowing what I know of you now, would say as I say [*I had a mind to mortify a pride that I am sure deserves to be mortified*]; that your politeness is not regular, nor constant. It is not *habit*. It is too much seen by fits and starts, and sallies, and those not spontaneous. You must be *reminded* into them.

O Lord! O Lord!—Poor I!—was the light, yet the half-angry wretch's self-pitying expression!

I proceeded.—Upon my word, sir, you are not the accomplished man which your talents and opportunities would have led one to expect you to be. You are indeed in your noviciate as to every laudable attainment.

—o—

LETTER XLVII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

[In continuation.]

As this subject was introduced by himself, and treated so lightly by him, I was going on to tell him more of my mind; but he interrupted me—Dear, dear Madam, spare me. I am sorry that I have lived to this hour for nothing at all. But surely you could not have quitted a subject so much more agreeable, and so much more *suitable,* I will say, to your present situation, if you had not too cruel a pleasure in mortifying a man, who the less needed to be mortified, as he *before* looked up to you with a diffidence in his own merits too great to permit him to speak half his mind to you. Be pleased but to return to the subject we were upon; and at another time I will gladly embrace correction from the only lips in the world so qualified to give it.

You talk of reformation sometimes, Mr. Lovelace, and in so talking acknowledge errors. But I see you can very ill bear the reproof, for which perhaps you are not solicitous to avoid *giving* occasion. Far be it from me to take delight in finding fault; I should be glad for both our sakes, since my situation is what it is, that I could do nothing but praise you. But failures which affect a mind that need not be very delicate to be affected by them, are too grating to be passed over in silence by a person who wishes to be thought in earnest in her own duties.

I admire your delicacy, Madam, again interrupted he. Although I suffer by it, yet would I not have it otherwise: indeed I would not, when I consider of it. It is an angelic

delicacy, which sets you above all our sex, and even above your own. It is *natural* to *you*, Madam; so you may think it extraordinary: but there is nothing like it on earth, said the flatterer—what company has he kept!

But let us return to the former subject—You were so good as to ask me what I would advise you to do: I want but to make you easy; I want but to see you fixed to your liking: your faithful Hannah with you; your reconciliation with those to whom you wish to be reconciled, set on foot, and in a train. And now let me mention to you different expedients; in hopes that some one of them may be acceptable to you.

'I will go to Mrs. Howe, or to Miss Howe, or to whomsoever you would have me to go, and endeavour to prevail upon them to receive you.*

'Do you incline to go to Florence to your cousin Morden? I will furnish you with an opportunity of going thither, either by sea to Leghorn, or by land through France. Perhaps I may be able to procure one of the ladies of my family to attend you. Either Charlotte or Patty would rejoice in such an opportunity of seeing France and Italy. As for myself, I will only be your escort, in disguise, if you will have it so, even in your *livery*, that your punctilio may not receive offence by my attendance.'

I told him I would consider of all he had said: but that I hoped for a line or two from my aunt Hervey, if not from my sister, to both of whom I had written, which if I were to be so favoured, might help to determine me. Meantime, if he would withdraw, I would particularly consider of this proposal of his in relation to my cousin Morden. And if it held its weight with me, so far as to write for your opinion upon it, he should know my mind in an hour's time.

He withdrew with great respect: and in an hour's time

* The reader, perhaps, need not be reminded that he had taken care from the first (see vol. i. Letter XXXI.) to deprive her of any protection from Mrs. Howe. See in his next letter a repeated account of the same artifices, and his exultations upon his inventions to impose upon two such watchful ladies as Clarissa and Miss Howe.

:urned. And then I told him it was unnecessary to ›uble you for your opinion about it. My cousin Morden ıs soon expected. If he were not, I could not admit him accompany me to him upon any condition. It was ghly improbable that I should obtain the favour of either his cousin's company: and if that *could* be brought about, would be the same thing in the world's eye as if he went nself.

This led us into another conversation; which shall be the bject of my next.

—o—

LETTER XLVIII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

[In continuation.]

MR. LOVELACE told me that, on the supposition that his oposal in relation to my cousin Morden might not be cepted, he had been studying to find out, if possible, some her expedient that might be agreeable, in order to convince e that he preferred my satisfaction to his own.

He then offered to go himself and procure my Hannah come and attend me. As I had declined the service of ther of the young Misses Sorlings, he was extremely soli-tous, he said, that I should have a servant in whose in-grity I might confide.

I told him that you would be so kind as to send to engage annah, if possible.

If anything, he said, should prevent Hannah from coming, ıppose he himself waited upon Miss Howe, to desire her › lend me *her* servant till I was provided to my mind?

I said your mother's high displeasure at the step I had ıken (as *she* supposed, voluntarily), had deprived me of an pen assistance of that sort from *you*.

He was amazed, so much as Mrs. Howe herself used to dmire me, and so great an influence as Miss Howe was ıpposed, and deserved to have over her mother, that Mrs.

Howe should take upon herself to be so much offended with me. He wished that the man who took such pains to keep up and enflame the passions of my father and uncles, were not at the bottom of this mischief too.

I was afraid, I said, that my brother *was:* or else my uncle Anthony, I dared to say, would not have taken such pains to set Mrs. Howe against me, as I understood he had done.

Since I had declined visiting Lady Sarah, and Lady Betty, he asked me if I should admit of a visit from his cousin Montague, and accept of a servant of hers for the present?

That was not, I said, an acceptable proposal: but I would first see if my friends would send me my clothes, that I might not make such a giddy and runaway appearance to any of his relations.

If I pleased he would take another journey to Windsor, to make a more particular inquiry amongst the canons, or in any worthy family.

Were not his objections as to the publicness of the place, I asked him, as strong now as before?

I remember, my dear, in one of your former letters, you mentioned London as the most private place to be in:* and I said that since he made such pretences against leaving me here, as showed he had no intention to do so; and since he engaged to go from me, and leave me to pursue my own measures, if I were elsewhere; and since his presence made these lodgings inconvenient to me; I should not be disinclined to go to London, did I know anybody there.

As he had several times proposed London to me, I expected that he would eagerly have embraced that motion from me. But he took not ready hold of it: yet I thought his eye approved of it.

We are both great watchers of each other's eyes; and indeed seem to be more than half afraid of each other.

He then made a grateful proposal to me: 'that I would 'send for my Norton to attend me.'†

* See vol. i. Letter XLIX.

† The reader is referred to Mr. Lovelace's next letter, for his motives in making the several proposals of which the lady is willing to think so well.

He saw by my eyes, he said, that he had at last been ppy in an expedient which would answer the wishes of both. Why, says he, did not I think of it before?—And itching my hand, Shall I write, Madam? Shall I send? all I go and fetch the worthy woman myself?

After a little consideration I told him that this was *eed* a grateful motion: but that I apprehended it would t her to a difficulty which she would not be able to get er; as it would make a woman of her known prudence pear to countenance a fugitive daughter in opposition to parents; and as her coming to me would deprive her my mother's favour, without its being in my power to ke it up to her.

Oh, my beloved creature! said he, *generously enough*, let t this be an obstacle. I will do everything for Mrs. rton you wish to have done.—Let me go for her.

More coolly than perhaps his generosity deserved, I told n it was impossible but I must soon hear from my nds. I should not, meantime, embroil anybody with m. Not Mrs. Norton, especially, from whose interest and mediation with my mother, I might expect some d, were she to keep herself in a neutral state: that ides the good woman had a mind above her fortune; l would sooner want than be beholden to anybody properly.

Improperly! said he.—Have not persons of merit a *right* all the benefits conferred upon them?—Mrs. Norton is good a woman, that I shall think she lays me under obligation if she will put it in my power to serve her; hough she were *not* to augment it, by giving me the portunity, at the same time, of contributing to your asure and satisfaction.

How could this man, with such powers of right thinking, so far depraved by evil habits as to disgrace his talents wrong acting?

Is there not room, after all, thought I, at the time, to hope he so lately led me to hope) that the example it will ove me, for *both* our sakes, to endeavour to set him, may

influence him to a change of manners in which both m find our account?

Give me leave, sir, said I, to tell you there is a strar mixture in your mind. You must have taken *pains* suppress many good motions and reflections as they are or levity must have been surprisingly predominant in it. But as to the subject we were upon, there is no taking a resolutions till I hear from my friends.

Well, Madam, I can only say I would find out son expedient, if I could, that should be agreeable to you. B since I cannot, will you be so good as to tell me what yc would wish to have done? Nothing in the world but I wi comply with, excepting leaving you here at such a distanc from the place I shall be in, if anything should happen and in a place where my gossiping rascals have made me i a manner public, for want of proper cautions at first.

These vermin, added he, have a pride they can hardl rein-in, when they serve a man of family. They boast o their master's pedigree and descent as if they were relate to him. Nor is anything they know of him, or of hi affairs, a secret to one another, were it a matter that woul hang him.

If so, thought I, men of family should take care to giv them subjects worth boasting of.

I am quite at a loss, said I, what to do or where to g Would you, Mr. Lovelace, in earnest, advise me to think going to London?

And I looked at him with steadfastness. But nothi could I gather from his looks.

At first, Madam, said he, I was for proposing London, I was then more apprehensive of pursuit. But as your re tions seem cooler on that head, I am the more indiffere about the place you go to.—So as *you* are pleased, so as y are easy, I shall be happy.

This indifference of his to London, I cannot but s made me incline the more to go thither. I asked him (hear what he would say) if he could recommend me to a *particular place* in London?

No, he said: none that was fit for me, or that I should ke. His friend Belford, indeed, had very handsome lodgngs near Soho Square, at a relation's, whose wife was a woman of virtue and honour. These, as Mr. Belford was generally in the country, he could borrow till I were better accommodated.

I was resolved to refuse these at the first mention, as I should any other he had named. Nevertheless, I will see, thought I, if he has really thoughts of these for me. If I break off the talk here, and he resume this proposal with earnestness in the morning, I shall apprehend that he is less indifferent than he seems to be about my going to London, and that he has already a lodging in his eye for me. And then I will not go at all.

But after such generous motions from him, I really think it a little barbarous to act and behave as if I thought him capable of the blackest and most ungrateful baseness. But his character, his principles, are so faulty!—He is so light, so vain, so various, that there is no certainty that he will be next hour what he is this. Then, my dear, I have no guardian now; no father, no mother! only God and my vigilance to depend upon. And I have no reason to expect a miracle in my favour.

Well, sir, said I [rising to leave him], something must be resolved upon: but I will postpone this subject till to-morrow morning.

He would fain have engaged me longer; but I said I would see him as early as he pleased in the morning. He might think of any convenient place in London, or near it, meantime.

And so I retired from him. As I do from my pen; hoping for better rest for the few hours that remain of this night than I have had of a long time.

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

—o—

LETTER XLIX.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

[In continuation.]

Monday Morning, April 1

LATE as I went to bed, I have had very little rest. Sl and I have quarrelled: and although I court it, it will r be friends. I hope its fellow-irreconcilables at Harlo Place enjoy its balmy comforts. Else that will be aggravation of my fault. My brother and sister, I da say, want it not.

Mr. Lovelace, who is an early riser, as well as I, join me in the garden about six; and after the usual salutatio asked me to resume our last night's subject. It was up lodgings at London, he said.

I think you mentioned one to me, sir—did you not?

Yes, Madam [but, watching the turn of my coun nance], rather as what you would be welcome to, th perhaps approve of.

I believe so too. To go to town upon an *uncertainty* own, is not agreeable: but to be obliged to any persons your acquaintance, when I want to be thought independ of you; and to a person, especially, to whom my frie are to direct to me, if they vouchsafe to take notice of at all, is an absurd thing to mention.

He did not mention it as what he imagined I wo accept, but only to confirm to me what he had said, that himself knew of none fit for me.

Has not your family, Madam, some one tradesman t deal with, who has conveniences of this kind? I wo make it worth such a person's while to keep the secret your being at his house. Traders are dealers in pins, s he, and will be more obliged by a penny customer than a pound present, because it is in their way: yet will ref neither, any more than a lawyer or a man of office his fe

My father's tradesmen, I said, would no doubt be

rst employed to find me out. So that *that* proposal was as wrong as the other. And who is it that a creature so lately n favour with all her friends can apply to, in such a situa-ion as mine, but must be (at least) equally the friends of her relations.

We had a good deal of discourse upon the same topic. But at last the result was this—He wrote a letter to one Mr. Doleman, a married man of fortune and character (I excepting to Mr. Belford), desiring him to provide decent apartments ready furnished [*I had told him what they should be*] for a single woman; consisting of a bed-chamber; another for a maid-servant; with the use of a dining-room or parlour. This letter he gave me to peruse; and then sealed it up and despatched it away in my presence by one of his own servants, who, having business in town, is to bring back an answer.

I attend the issue of it; holding myself in readiness to set out for London, unless you, my dear, advise the contrary.

—o—

LETTER L.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Saturday, Sunday, Monday.

He gives, in several letters, the substance of what is contained in the last seven of the lady's.

He tells his friend, that calling at The Lawn, in his way to M. Hall (for he owns that he went not to Windsor), he found the letters from Lady Betty Laurance, and his cousin Montague, which Mrs. Greme was about sending to him by a special messenger.

He gives the particulars, from Mrs. Greme's report, of what passed between the lady and her, as in Letter XXI., and makes such declarations to Mrs. Greme of his honour and affection to the lady, as put her upon writing the letter

to her sister Sorlings, the contents of which are in Lett XLIII.

He then accounts, as follows, for the serious humour he foun her in on his return.

Upon such good terms when we parted, I was surprised t find so solemn a brow upon my return, and her charmin eyes red with weeping. But when I had understood she ha received letters from Miss Howe, it was natural to imagi that that little devil had put her out of humour with me.

It is easy for me to perceive that my charmer is mo sullen when she receives, and has perused, a letter from tha vixen than at other times. But as the sweet maid shows even then, more of *passive grief* than of *active spirit*, I hope she is rather lamenting than plotting. And indeed for what now should she plot? when I am become a reformed man, and am hourly improving in my morals?—Nevertheless, I must contrive some way or other to get at their correspondence—only to see the turn of it; that's all.

But no attempt of this kind must be made yet. A detected invasion, in an article so sacred, would ruin me beyond retrieve. Nevertheless, it vexes me to the heart to think that she is hourly writing her whole mind on all that passes between her and me, I under the same roof with her, yet kept at such awful distance that I dare not break into a correspondence that may perhaps be a means to defeat all my devices.

Would it be *very* wicked, Jack, to knock her messenger on the head, as he is carrying my beloved's letters, or returning with Miss Howe's?—To attempt to bribe him, and no succeed, would utterly ruin me. And the man seems to b one *used to poverty*, one who can sit down satisfied with i and enjoy it; contented with hand to mouth convenience and not aiming to live better to-morrow than he do to-day, and than he did yesterday. Such a one is abo temptation, unless it could come clothed in the guise *truth* and *trust*. What likelihood of corrupting a man wh has no hope, no ambition?

Yet the rascal has but *half* life, and groans under that. Should I be answerable in his case for a *whole* life?—But hang the fellow! Let him live. Were I king, or a minister of state, an Antonia Perez,* it were another thing. And yet, on second thoughts, am I not a *rake*, as it is called? And who ever knew a rake stick at anything? But thou knowest, Jack, that the greatest half of my wickedness is vapour, to show my invention; and to prove that I *could* be mischievous if I would.

When he comes to that part where the lady says (Letter XLIV.) in a sarcastic way, waving her hand, and bowing, "Excuse me, *good* Mr. Lovelace, that I am willing to think the best of my father," *he gives a description of her air and manner, greatly to her advantage; and says:*

I could hardly forbear taking her into my arms upon it, in spite of an expected *tempest*. So much wit, so much beauty, such a lively manner, and such exceeding quickness and penetration! O Belford! she must be nobody's but mine. I can now account for and justify Herod's command to destroy his Mariamne, if he returned not alive from his interview with Cæsar: for were I to know that it were but probable that any other man were to have this charming creature, even after my death, the very thought would be enough to provoke me to cut that man's throat, were he a prince.

I may be deemed by this lady a rabid, a boisterous lover—and *she* may like me the less for it: but all the ladies I have met with, till now, loved to raise a tempest, and to enjoy it: nor did they ever raise it, but I enjoyed it too!—Lord, send us once happily to London!

Mr. Lovelace gives the following account of his rude rapture, when he seized her hand, and put her, by his WILD *manner, as she expresses it, Letter XLIV., into such terror.*

* Antonio Perez was first minister of Philip II. king of Spain, by whose command he caused Don Juan de Escovedo to be assassinated: which brought on his own ruin, through the perfidy of his viler master.—*Geddé's Tracts.*

Darkness and light, I swore, were convertible at pleasure: she could make any subject plausible. I was error: she all perfection. And I snatched her hand; a more than kissed it, I was ready to devour it. There wa believe, a kind of phrensy in my manner, which threw her i a panic, like that of Semele perhaps when the Thunde in all his majesty, surrounded with ten thousand celes burning-glasses, was about to scorch her into a cinder.

HAD not my heart misgiven me, and had I not, just time, recollected that she was not so much in my power, b that she might abandon me at her pleasure, having mo friends in that house than I had, I should at that mome have made offers that would have decided all, one way other.—But apprehending that I had shown too mu meaning in my passion, I gave it another turn.—But litt did the charmer think what an escape either she or I h (as the event might have proved) from the sudden gust passion, which had like to have blown me into her arms. She was born, I told her, to make me happy and to sa a soul————

He gives the rest of his vehement speech pretty nearly in t same words as the lady gives them, and then proceeds:

I SAW she was frighted: and she would have had rea had the scene been London, and that place in Lond which I have in view to carry her to. She confirmed in my apprehension that I had alarmed her too much: told me that she saw what my boasted regard to her inju tions was; and she would take proper measures upon it, I should find: that she was shocked at my violent airs; a if I hoped any favour from her, I must that instant wi draw, and leave her to her recollection.

She pronounced this in such a manner as showed was set upon it; and having stepped out of the *gentle* a *polite* part I had so newly engaged to act, I thought re obedience was the best atonement. And indeed I

sensible, from her anger and repulses, that I wanted time myself for recollection. And so I withdrew, with the same veneration as a petitioning subject would withdraw from the presence of his sovereign. But, O Belford! had she had but the least patience with me—had she but made me think that she would forgive this initiatory ardour—surely she will not be always thus guarded.—

I had not been a moment by myself, but I was sensible that I had half-forfeited my newly-assumed character. It is exceedingly difficult, thou seest, for an honest man to act in disguises: as the poet says, *Thrust Nature back with a pitch-fork, it will return.* I recollected that what she had insisted upon was really a part of that declared will before she left her father's house, to which in another case (to humble her) I had pretended to have an inviolable regard. And when I had remembered her words of *taking her measures accordingly*, I was resolved to sacrifice a leg or an arm to make all up again, before she had time to determine upon any new measures.

How seasonably to this purpose have come in my aunt's and cousin's letters!

I HAVE sent in again and again to implore her to admit me to her presence. But she will conclude a letter she is writing to Miss Howe, before she will see me.—I suppose to give an account of what has just passed.

CURSE upon her perverse tyranny! How she makes me wait for a humble audience, though she has done writing some time! A prince begging for her upon his knees should not prevail upon me to spare her, if I can but get her to London—Oons! Jack, I believe I have bit my lip through for vexation!—But one day *hers* shall smart for it.

Mr. Lovelace, beginning a new date, gives an account of his admittance, and of the conversation that followed; which differing only in style from that the lady gives in the next letter is omitted.

He collects the lady's expressions which his pride cannot bear; such as, That he is a stranger to the decorums which she thought inseparable from a man of birth and education; *and* that he is not the accomplished man he imagines himself to be; *and threatens to remember them against her.*

He values himself upon his proposals and speeches, which he gives to his friend pretty much to the same purpose that the lady does in her four last letters.

After mentioning his proposal to her that she would borrow a servant from Miss Howe, till Hannah could come, he writes as follows:

Thou seest, Belford, that my charmer has no notion that Miss Howe herself is but a puppet danced upon my wires at second or third hand. To outwit, and impel, as I please, two *such girls* as these, who think they know everything; and by taking advantage of the pride and ill-nature of the old ones of both families, to play *them* off likewise at the very time they think they are doing me spiteful displeasure; what charming revenge!—Then the sweet creature, when I wished that her *brother* was not at the bottom of Mrs. Howe's resentment, to tell me that she was afraid he *was*, or her uncle would not have appeared against her to that lady!—Pretty dear! how innocent!

But don't think me the *cause* neither of her family's malice and resentment. It is in all their hearts. I work but with their materials. They, if left to their own wicked direction, would perhaps express their revenge by fire and faggot; that is to say, by the private dagger, or by Lord Chief Justices' warrants, by law, and so forth: I only point the lightning, and teach it where to dart, without the thunder. In other words, I only guide the effects: the cause is in their malignant hearts: and while I am doing little mischief, I prevent a great deal.

Thus he exults on her mentioning London:

I wanted her to propose London herself. This made me

ention Windsor. If you would have a woman do
g, you must always propose another, and that the
ıtrary: the sex! the very sex! as I hope to be
-Why, Jack, they lay a man under a necessity to
ıbly with them! And when they find themselves
d, they cry out upon an honest fellow, who has
ı hard for them at their own weapons.
ld hardly contain myself. My heart was at my
-Down, down, said I to myself, exuberant exulta-
\ sudden cough befriended me; I again turned to
as *indifferenced over* as a girl at the first long-ex-
uestion, who waits for two more. I heard out the
er speech: and when she had done, instead of say-
hing to her of London, I advised her *to send for her*
rton.
new she would be afraid of lying under obligation,
ıave proposed to do so much for the good woman
son as would have made her resolve that I should
ing: this, however, not merely to avoid expense.
e was no such thing as allowing of the presence of
ırton. I might as well have had her mother or her
ervey with her. Hannah, had she been able to
ıd had she actually come, I could have done well
vith. What do I keep fellows idling in the country
to fall in love, and even to marry those whom I
ave them to marry? Nor upon second thoughts
ıe presence of her Norton, or of her aunt, or even
other, have saved the dear creature, had I decreed

ınequal is a modest woman to the adventure, when
ws herself into the power of a rake! Punctilio will
me stand for reason with such a one. She cannot
rough a well-tested modesty. None but the impu-
e rogues, who can name the parson and the church
ou think of either, and undress and go to bed before
ıext hour, should think of running away with a man.

n the right train now. Every hour, I doubt not,

will give me an increasing interest in the affections of thi proud beauty. I have just carried *unpoliteness* far enough to *make her afraid of me;* and to show her that I am *no whiner.* Every instance of politeness now will give me double credit with her. My next point will be to make her acknowledge a *lambent* flame, a preference of me to all other men at least: and then my happy hour is not far off. An *acknowledged* reciprocality in love sanctifies every little freedom: and little freedoms beget greater. And if she call me *ungenerous,* I can call her *cruel.* The sex love to be called cruel. Many a time have I complained of cruelty, even in the act of yielding, because I knew it gratified the fair one's pride.

Mentioning that he had only hinted at Mr. Belford's lodgings as an instance to confirm what he had told her, that he knew of none in London fit for her, he says:

I had a mind to alarm her with something furthest from my purpose; for (as much as she disliked my motion) I intend nothing by it: Mrs. Osgood is too pious a woman; and would have been more *her* friend than *mine.*

I had a view, moreover, to give her a high opinion of her own sagacity. I love, when I dig a pit, to have my prey tumble in with secure feet and open eyes: then a man can look down upon her, with an *O-ho, charmer, how came you there?*

—o—

Monday, April 17.

I HAVE just now received a fresh piece of intelligence from my agent, honest Joseph Leman. Thou knowest the history of poor Miss Betterton of Nottingham. James Harlowe is plotting to revive the resentments of her family against me. The Harlowes took great pains, some time ago, to endeavour to get to the bottom of that story. But now the foolish devils are resolved to do something in it if they can. My head is working to make this booby 'squire a plotter, and a clever fellow, in order to turn his plots to my

advantage, supposing his sister shall aim to keep me *at arm's length when in town, and to send me from her.* But I will in proper time, let thee see Joseph's letter, and what I shall answer to it.* To know in time a designed mischief is, with me, to disappoint it, and to turn it upon the contriver's head.

Joseph is plaguy squeamish again; but I know he only intends by his qualms to swell his merits with me. O Belford! Belford! what a vile corruptible rogue, whether in poor or rich, is human nature!

—o—

LETTER LI.

Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

[In answer to Letters XLIII.—XLIX. inclusive.]

Tuesday, April 18.

You have a most implacable family. Another visit from your uncle Antony has not only confirmed my mother an enemy to our correspondence, but has almost put her upon treading in their steps.—

But to other subjects:

You plead generously for Mr. Hickman. Perhaps with regard to him, I may have done, as I have often done in singing—begun a note or key too high; and yet, rather than begin again, proceed, though I strain my voice, or spoil my tune. But this is evident, the man is the more observant for it; and you have taught me that the spirit which is the humbler for ill usage, will be insolent upon better. So, good and grave Mr. Hickman, keep your distance a little longer, I beseech you. You have erected an altar to me; and I hope you will not refuse to bow to it.

But you ask me if I would treat Mr. Lovelace, were he to be in Mr. Hickman's place, as I do Mr. Hickman? Why really, my dear, I believe I should not.—I have been very sagely considering this point of behaviour (in general) on

* See Letters LXII. and LXIII. of this volume.

both sides in courtship; and I will very candidly tell yo the result. I have concluded that politeness, even to excess is necessary on the men's part, to bring us to listen to thei first addresses, in order to induce us to bow our necks to a yoke so unequal. But upon my conscience, I very much doubt whether a little intermingled insolence is not requisite from them to keep up that interest, when once it has got footing. Men must not let us see that we can make fools of them. And I think that *smooth* love; that is to say, a passion without rubs; in other words, a passion without passion; is like a sleepy stream that is hardly seen to give motion to a straw. So that sometimes to make us fear, and even for a short space to *hate* the wretch, is productive of the *contrary* extreme.

If this be so, Lovelace, than whom no man was ever more polite and obsequious at the *beginning*, has hit the very point. For his turbulence *since*, his readiness to offend, and his equal readiness to humble himself (as he is known to be a man of sense, and of courage too), must keep a woman's passion alive; and at last tire her into a non-resistance that shall make her as passive as a tyrant husband would wish her to be.

I verily think that the different behaviour of our two heroes to their heroines make out this doctrine to demonstration. I am so much accustomed, for my own part, to Hickman's whining, creeping, submissive courtship, that I now expect nothing but whine and cringe from him: and am so little moved with his nonsense that I am frequently forced to go to my harpsichord to keep me awake and to silence his humdrum. Whereas Lovelace keeps up the ball with a witness, and all his address and conversation is one continual game at racquet.

Your frequent quarrels and reconciliations verify this observation: and I really believe that could Hickman have kept my attention alive after the Lovelace manner, only that he had preserved his morals, I should have married the man by this time. But then he must have *set out* accordingly. For now he can never, never recover himself,

iat's certain; but must be a dangler to the end of the ourtship-chapter; and, what is still worse for him, a assive to the end of his life.

Poor Hickman! perhaps you'll say.

I have been called your echo—Poor Hickman! say I.

You wonder, my dear, that Mr. Lovelace took not notice to you over-night of the letters of Lady Betty and his cousin. I don't like his keeping such a material and *relative* circumstance, as I may call it, one moment from you. By his communicating the contents of them to you next day, when you was angry with him, it looks as if he withheld them for *occasional pacifiers;* and if so, must he not have had a forethought that he might give you *cause* for anger? Of all the circumstances that have happened since you have been with him, I think I like this the least: this alone, my dear, small as it might look to an *indifferent* eye, in *mine* warrants all your caution. Yet I think that Mrs. Greme's letter to her sister Sorlings: his repeated motions for Hannah's attendance; and for that of one of the widow Sorlings' daughters; and, above all, for that of Mrs. Norton; are agreeable counter-balances. Were it not for these circumstances, I should have said a great deal more of the other. Yet what a foolish fellow, to let you know over-night that he *had* such letters!—I can't tell what to make of him.

I am pleased with the contents of these ladies' letters. And the more, as I have caused the family to be again sounded, and find that they are all as desirous as ever of your alliance.

They really are (every one of them) your very great admirers. And as for Lord M., he is so much pleased with you, and with the confidence, as he calls it, which you have reposed in his nephew, that he vows he will disinherit him, if he reward it not as he ought. You must take care that you lose not both families.

I hear Mrs. Norton is enjoined, as she values the favour of the *other* family, not to correspond either with you or with me—Poor creatures!—But they are your—yet they

are not your *relations,* neither, I believe. Had you had other nurse, I should have concluded you had been char I suffer by their low malice—excuse me, therefore.

You really hold this man to his good behavour with i spirit than I thought you mistress of; especially wh judged of you by that meekness which you always tended for as the proper distinction of the female chara and by the love, which (think as you please) you cert have for him. You may rather be proud of than ang the imputation; since you are the only woman I knew, read, or heard of, whose love was so much gove by her prudence. But when once the indifference of husband takes place of the ardour of the lover, it wil *your* turn: and if I am not mistaken, this man, wh the only self-admirer I ever knew who was not a coxc will rather in his day expect homage than pay it.

Your handsome husbands, my dear, make a wife's l ache very often: and though you are as fine a person woman, at the least, as he is of a man, he will take much delight in *himself* to think himself more indebt your favour, than you are to his distinction and prefer of you. But no man, take your finer mind with your fine person, can deserve you. So you must be conte should your merit be under-rated; since that *must* b marry whom you will. Perhaps you will think I inc these sort of reflections against your Narcissuses of me keep my mother's choice for me of Hickman in counten with myself—I don't know but there is something in it least, enough to have given birth to the reflection.

I think there can be no objection to your goin London. There, as in the centre, you will be in the of hearing from everybody, and sending to anybody. then you will put all his sincerity to the test, *as t promised absence,* and such like.

But indeed, my dear, I think you have nothing for i marriage. You may try (that you may say you *have* what your relations can be brought to: but the mo they refuse your proposals, submit to the yoke, and

the best of it. He will be a savage indeed, if he makes you speak out. Yet, it is my opinion that you *must* bend a little; for he cannot bear to be thought slightly of.

This was one of his speeches once; I believe designed for me—'A woman who means one day to favour her lover 'with her hand, should show the world, for her *own* sake, 'that she distinguishes him from the common herd.'

Shall I give you another very fine sentence of his, and in the true libertine style, as he spoke it, throwing out his challenging hand?—'D—n him, if he would marry the 'first princess on earth, if he but thought she balanced a 'minute in her choice of *him*, or of an *emperor*.'

All the world, in short, expect you to have this man. They think that you left your father's house for this very purpose. The longer the ceremony is delayed, the worse appearance it will have in the world's eye. And it will not be the fault of some of your relations, if a slur be not thrown upon your reputation, while you continue unmarried. Your uncle Antony, in particular, speaks rough and vile things, grounded upon the morals of his *brother Orson*. But hitherto your admirable character has antidoted the poison; the detractor is despised, and every one's indignation raised against him.

I have written through many interruptions: and you will see the first sheet creased and rumpled, occasioned by putting it into my bosom on my mother's sudden coming upon me. We have had one very pretty debate, I will assure you; but it is not worth while to trouble you with the particulars.—But upon my word—no matter though——

Your Hannah cannot attend you. The poor girl left her place about a fortnight ago, on account of the rheumatic disorder, which has confined her to her room ever since. She burst into tears when Kitty carried to her your desire of having her with you; and called herself doubly unhappy, that she could not wait upon a mistress whom she so early loved.

Had my mother answered my wishes, I should have been sorry Mr. Lovelace had been the *first* proposer of my

Kitty for your attendant, till Hannah should come. T be altogether among strangers, and a stranger to atten you every time you remove, is a very disagreeable thin But your considerateness and bounty will make you faith ful ones wherever you go.

You must take your own way: but if you suffer an inconvenience, either as to clothes or money, that it is i my power to remedy, I will never forgive you. M mother (if *that* be your objection) need not know any thing of the matter.

We have all our defects: we have often regretted th particular fault which, though in venerable character we must have been blind not to see.

I remember what you once said to me; and the cautio was good: Let us, my Nancy, were your words; let u who have not the same failings as those we censure, guar against *other* and *greater* in ourselves. Nevertheless, must needs tell you that my mother has vexed me a littl very lately, by some instances of her jealous narrowness I will mention one of them, though I did not intend it She wanted to borrow thirty guineas of me: *only* whil she got a note changed. I said I could lend her but eigh or ten. Eight or ten would not do: she thought I wa much richer. I could have told her, I was much cunninge than to let her know my stock; which, on a review, I fin ninety-five guineas; and all of them most heartily at you service.

I believe your uncle Tony put her upon this wise pro ject; for she was *out of cash* in an hour after he left her.

If he did, you will judge that they intend to distres you. If it will provoke *you* to demand your own in legal way, I wish they would; since their putting yo upon that course will justify the necessity of your leavin them. And as it is not for your credit to own that yo were tricked away contrary to your intention, this woul afford a reason for your going off, that I should mak very good use of. You'll see, that I approve of Lovelace' advice upon this subject. I am not willing to allow th

weight to your answer to him on that head, which perhaps ought to be allowed it.*

You must be the less surprised at the inventions of this man, because of his uncommon talents. Whatever he had turned his head to, he would have excelled in, or been (or done things) extraordinary. He is said to be revengeful: a very bad quality! I believe, indeed, he is a devil in everything but his foot—this, therefore, is my repeated advice—provoke him not too much against yourself: but unchain him, and let him loose upon your sister's vile Betty, and your brother's Joseph Leman. This is resenting *low:* but I know to whom I write, or else I would go a good deal *higher* [I'll assure you].

Your next, I suppose, will be from London. Pray direct it and your future letters, till further notice, to Mr. Hickman at his own house. He is entirely devoted to you. Don't take so heavily my mother's partiality and prejudices. I hope I am past a baby.

Heaven preserve you, and make you as happy as I think you deserve to be, prays

Your ever affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER LII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Wednesday Morning, April 19.

I AM glad, my dear friend, that you approve of my removal to London.

The disagreement between your mother and you gives me inexpressible affliction. I hope I think you both more unhappy than you are. But I beseech you let me know the particulars of the debate you call *a very pretty one.* I am well acquainted with your dialect. When I am informed of the whole, let your mother have been ever

* See Letter XLVI. of this volume.

so severe upon me, I shall be easier a great deal.—Faulty people should rather deplore the occasion they have given for anger than resent it.

If I am to be obliged to anybody in England for money, it shall be to you. Your mother need not know of your kindness to me, you say—but she *must* know it, if it be done, and if she challenge my beloved friend upon it; for would you either falsify or prevaricate?—I wish your mother could be made easy on this head—forgive me, my dear,—but I know—yet once she had a better opinion of me.—Oh, my inconsiderate rashness!—Excuse me once more, I pray you.—Pride, when it is *native*, will show itself sometimes in the midst of mortifications—but my stomach is down already.

I AM unhappy that I cannot have my worthy Hannah. I am as sorry for the poor creature's illness as for my own disappointment by it. Come, my dear Miss Howe, since you press me to be beholden to you: and would think me proud if I absolutely refused your favour; pray be so good as to send her two guineas in my name.

If I have nothing for it, as you say, but matrimony, it yields a little comfort that his relations do not despise *the fugitive*, as persons of their rank and quality pride might be supposed to do, for having *been* a fugitive.

But oh, my cruel, thrice cruel uncle! to suppose—but my heart checks my pen, and will not let it proceed on an intimation so extremely shocking as that which he supposes!—Yet, if thus they have been persuaded, no wonder if they are irreconcilable.

This is all my hard-hearted brother's doings!—His surmisings:—God forgive him—prays his injured sister!

—o—

LETTER LIII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Thursday, April 20.

MR. LOVELACE'S servant is already returned with an answer from his friend Mr. Doleman, who has taken pains in his inquiries, and is very particular. Mr. Lovelace brought me the letter as soon as he had read it: and as he now knows that I acquaint you with everything that offers, I desired him to let me send it to you for your perusal. Be pleased to return it by the first opportunity. You will see by it, that his friends in town have a notion that we are actually married.

To Robert Lovelace, Esq.

Tuesday Night, April 18.

DEAR SIR,—I am extremely rejoiced to hear that we shall so soon have you in town after so long an absence. You will be the more welcome still, if what report says be true; which is, that you are *actually married* to the fair lady upon whom we have heard you make such encomiums. Mrs. Doleman, and my sister, both wish you joy if you are; and joy upon your near prospect if you are not.

I have been in town for this week past, to get help, if I could, from my paralytic complaints; and am in a course for them. Which, nevertheless, did not prevent me from making the desired inquiries. This is the result.

You may have a first floor, well furnished, at a mercer's in Bedford Street, Covent Garden, with conveniences for servants: and these either by the quarter or month. The terms according to the conveniences required.

Mrs. Doleman has seen lodgings in Norfolk Street and others in Cecil Street; but though the prospects to the Thames and Surrey Hills look inviting from both these streets, yet I suppose they are too near the city.

The owner of those in Norfolk Street would have half the house go together. It would be too much for your

description therefore: and I suppose, that when you think fit to *declare your marriage*, you will hardly be in lodgings.

Those in Cecil Street are neat and convenient. The owner is a widow of a good character; and she insists that you take them for a twelvemonth certain.

You may have good accommodations in Dover Street, at a widow's, the relict of an officer in the guards, who dying soon after he had purchased his commission (to which he had a good title by service, and which cost him most part of what he had) she *was obliged to let lodgings.*

This may possibly be an objection. But she is very careful, she says, that she takes no lodgers but of *figure* and *reputation.* She rents two good houses, distant from each other, only joined by a *large handsome passage.* The *inner house* is the genteellest, and very elegantly furnished; but you may have the use of a very handsome parlour in the *outer house*, if you choose to look into the street.

A little garden belongs to the inner house, in which the old gentlewoman has displayed a true female fancy; having crammed it with vases, flower-pots, and figures, without number.

As these lodgings seemed to me the most likely to please you, I was more particular in my inquiries about them. The apartments she has to let are in the inner house: they are a dining-room, two neat parlours, a withdrawing room, two or three handsome bed-chambers, one with a pretty light closet in it, which looks into the little garden, all furnished in taste.

A *dignified clergyman*, his *wife*, and *maiden daughter* were the last who lived in them. They have but lately quitted them, on his being presented to a considerable church preferment in Ireland. The gentlewoman says that he took the lodgings but for *three months* certain; but liked them and *her usage* so well, that he continued in them *two years;* and left them with regret, though on so good an account. She bragged that this was the way of all the lodgers she ever had, who stayed with her *four times as long as they at first intended.*

I had some knowledge of the colonel, who was always looked upon as a man of honour. His relict I never saw before. I think she has a *masculine air*, and is a *little forbidding at first:* but when I saw her behaviour to :wo agreeable *maiden gentlewomen*, her husband's nieces, whom, for *that* reason, she calls *doubly* hers, and heard heir praises of *her*, I could impute her very bulk to good iumour; since we seldom see your sour, peevish people ilump. She lives *reputably*, and is, as I find, *aforehand* in he world.

If these, or any other of the lodgings I have mentioned, e not altogether to your lady's mind, she may continue in hem *the less while*, and *choose others for herself.*

The widow consents that you shall take them for a *month* nly, and *what* of them you please. The terms, she says, ie will not fall out upon, when she knows what your lady rpects, and what *her* servants are to do, or *yours* will under- ike; for she observed that servants are generally worse to eal with than their masters or mistresses.

The lady may board or not as she pleases.

As we *suppose you married*, but that you have reason, om family differences, to keep it private for the present, thought it not amiss to hint as much to the widow (but *uncertainty*, however); and asked her, if she could, in iat case, accommodate you and your servants, as well as ie lady and hers? She said, she could; and wished, by all ieans, it were to be so: since the circumstance of a person's ing *single*, if not as well recommended as this lady, was ie *of her usual exceptions.*

If none of these lodgings please, you need not doubt very indsome ones in or near Hanover Square, Soho Square, olden Square, or in some of the new streets about Gros- nor Square. And Mrs. Doleman, her sister, and myself, ost cordially join to offer to your good lady the best commodations we can make for her at Uxbridge (and so for you, if you are the happy man we wish you to be), l she fits herself more to her mind.

Let me add, that the lodgings at the mercer's, those in

Cecil Street, those at the widow's in Dover Street, any them, may be entered upon at a day's warning.

I am, my dear sir,

Your sincere and affectionate friend and servant,

THO. DOLEMAN.

You will easily guess, my dear, when you have read tl letter, *which* lodgings I made choice of. But first to t him (as in so material a point I thought I could not be t circumspect), I seemed to prefer those in Norfolk Stree for the very reason the writer gives why he thought I wou *not;* that is to say, for its neighbourhood to a city so w governed as London is said to be. Nor should I have di liked a lodging in the heart of it, having heard but indiffere accounts of the liberties sometimes taken at the other er of the town.—Then seeming to incline to the lodgings Cecil Street—then to the mercer's. But he made no visib preference: and when I asked his opinion of the widow gentlewoman's, he said he thought those the most to m taste and convenience: but as he hoped that I would thin lodgings necessary but for a very little while, he knew n which to give his vote for.

I then fixed upon the widow's; and he has written accor ingly to Mr. Doleman, making my compliments to his lad and sister, for their kind offer.

I am to have the dining-room, the bed-chamber with t light closet (of which, if I stay any time at the widow's, shall make great use), and a servant's room; and we pr pose to set out on Saturday morning. As for a maid servan poor Hannah's illness is a great disappointment to me: bu as he observes, I can make the widow satisfaction for o of hers, till I can get a servant to my mind. And you kno I want not much attendance.

MR. LOVELACE has just now, of his own accord, given m five guineas for poor Hannah. I send them enclosed. B so good as to cause them to be conveyed to her, and to l her know from whom they came.

He has obliged me much by this little mark of his considerateness. Indeed I have had the better opinion of him ever since he proposed her return to me.

I HAVE just now *another* instance of his considerateness. He came to me, and said that, on second thoughts, he could not bear that I should go up to town without some attendant, were it but for the look of the thing to the London widow and her nieces, who, according to his friend's account, *lived so genteelly;* and especially *as I required him to leave me soon after I arrived there,* and so would be left alone among strangers. He therefore thought that I might engage Mrs. Sorlings to lend me one of her two maids, or let one of her daughters go up with me, and stay till I were provided. And if the latter, the young gentlewoman, no doubt, would be glad of so good an opportunity to see the curiosities of the town, and would be a proper attendant on the same occasions.

I told him, as I had done before, that the two young gentlewomen were so equally useful in their way, and servants in a busy farm were so little to be spared, that I should be loth to take them off their laudable employments. Nor should I think much of diversions for one while; and so the less want an attendant out of doors.

And now, my dear, lest anything should happen, in so variable a situation as mine, to over-cloud my prospects (which at present are more promising than ever yet they have been since I quitted Harlowe Place), I will snatch the opportunity to subscribe myself

Your not unhoping, and ever obliged
friend and servant,
CL. HARLOWE.

—o—

LETTER LIV.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Thursday, April 20.

He begins with communicating to him the letter he wrote to Mr. Doleman, *to procure suitable lodgings in town, and which he sent away by the lady's approbation: and then gives him a copy of the answer to it (see p. 309): upon which he thus expresses himself:*

Thou knowest the widow; thou knowest her nieces; thou knowest the lodgings: and didst thou ever read a letter more artfully couched than this of Tom Doleman? Every possible objection anticipated! Every accident provided against! Every tittle of it plot-proof!

Who could forbear smiling to see my charmer, like a farcical dean and chapter, choose what was before chosen for her; and sagaciously (as *they* go in form to prayers, that Heaven would direct their choice) pondering upon the different proposals, as if she would make me believe she had a mind for *some other?* The dear sly rogue looking upon me, too, with a view to discover some emotion in me. Emotions I had; but I can tell her that they lay deeper than her eye could reach, though it had been a sunbeam.

No confidence in me, fair one! None at all, 'tis plain. Thou wilt not, if I were inclined to change my views, encourage me by a generous reliance on my honour!—And shall it be said that I, a master of arts in love, shall be overmatched by so unpractised a novice?

But to see the charmer so far satisfied with my contrivance as to borrow my friend's letter, in order to satisfy Miss Howe likewise!—

Silly little rogues! to walk out into bye-paths on the strength of their own judgment!—When nothing but *experience* can enable them to disappoint us, and teach them grandmother wisdom! When they *have* it indeed, then may they sit down, like so many Cassandras, and

each caution to others; who will as little mind *them* as ey did *their* instructresses, whenever a fine handsome con- ent young fellow, such a one as thou knowest who, comes oss them.

But, Belford, didst thou not mind that sly rogue Dole- n's naming *Dover Street* for the widow's place of abode? What dost think could be meant by that?—'Tis impos- e thou shouldst guess, so, not to puzzle thee about it, pose the *Widow Sinclair's in Dover Street* should be uired after by some officious person, in order to come at racters [Miss Howe is as *sly* as the devil and as busy to full], and neither such a name, nor such a house, can ound in that street, nor a house to answer the description; ı will not the keenest hunter in England be at a fault?

ut how wilt thou do, methinks thou askest, to hinder lady from resenting the fallacy, and mistrusting thee the e on that account, when she finds it out to be in another et?

ho! never mind that: either I shall have a way for it, e shall thoroughly understand one another by that time; we don't, she'll know enough of me, not to wonder at a peccadilla.

ut how wilt thou hinder the lady from apprising her ıd of the real name?

he must first know it herself, monkey, must she not?

Vell, but how wilt thou do to hinder her from knowing street, and her friend from directing letters thither, which be the same thing as if the name were known?

et me alone for that too.

thou further objectest that Tom Doleman is too great ınce to write such a letter in answer to mine,—canst ı not imagine that, in order to save honest Tom all this ble, I who know the town so well, could send him a of what he should write, and leave him nothing to do transcribe?

Vhat now sayest thou to *me*, Belford?

nd suppose I had designed this task of inquiry for thee; suppose the lady excepted against thee for no other

reason in the world, but because of my value for thee? What sayest thou to the *lady*, Jack?

This it is to have leisure upon my hands!—What a matchless plotter thy friend!—Stand by, and let me swell!—I am already as big as an elephant, and ten times wiser!—Mightier too by far! Have I not reason to snuff the moon with my proboscis?—Lord help thee for a poor, for a very poor creature!—Wonder not that I despise thee heartily; since the man who is disposed immoderately to exalt himself, cannot do it but by despising everybody else in proportion.

I shall make good use of the *Dolemanic* hint of *being married*. But I will not tell thee all at once. Nor, indeed, have I thoroughly digested that part of my plot. When a general must regulate himself by the motions of a watchful adversary, how can he say beforehand what he will, or what he will not do?

Widow SINCLAIR, didst thou not say, Lovelace?—

Ay, SINCLAIR, Jack!—Remember the name! SINCLAIR, I repeat. She *has* no other. And her features being broad and full-blown, I will suppose her to be of Highland extraction; as her husband the colonel [*mind that too*] was a Scot, as brave, as honest.

I never forget the *minutiæ* in my contrivances. In all matters that admit of doubt, the *minutiæ*, closely attended to and provided for, are of more service than a thousand oaths, vows, and protestations made to supply the neglect of them, especially when jealousy has made its way in the working mind.

Thou wouldst wonder if thou knewest one half of my *providences*. To give thee but one—I have already been so good as to send up a list of books to be procured for the lady's closet, mostly at *secondhand*. And thou knowest that the women there are all well read. But I will not anticipate—besides, it looks as if I were afraid of leaving anything to my old friend CHANCE; which has many a time been an excellent second to me, and ought not to be affronted or despised; especially by one who has the art of making unpromising incidents turn out in his favour.

LETTER LV.

Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

Wednesday, April 19.

I HAVE a piece of intelligence to give you, which concerns u much to know.

Your brother having been assured that you are not rried, has taken a resolution to find you out, waylay you, l carry you off. A friend of his, a captain of a ship, lertakes to get you on ship-board, and to sail away with , either to Hull or Leith, in the way to one of your ther's houses.

hey are very wicked: for in spite of your virtue they clude you to be *ruined.* But if they can be assured when y have you that you are not, they will secure you till y can bring you out Mrs. Solmes. Meantime, in order ive Mr. Lovelace full employment, they talk of a prose- ion which will be set up against him, for some crime they e got a notion of, which they think, if it do not cost him life, will make him fly his country.

his is very early news. Miss Bell told it in confidence, with mighty triumph over Lovelace, to Miss Lloyd, who t present her favourite, though as much your admirer as :. Miss Lloyd, being very apprehensive of the mischief ch might follow such an attempt, told it to me, with e to apprise you privately of it—and yet neither she nor ould be sorry, perhaps, if Lovelace were to be fairly ged—that is to say, if *you,* my dear, had no objection to But we cannot bear that such an admirable creature ld be made the tennis-ball of two violent spirits—much that you should be seized, and exposed to the brutal tment of wretches who have no bowels.

f you can engage Mr. Lovelace to keep his temper upon think you should acquaint him with it, but not to men- Miss Lloyd. Perhaps his wicked agent may come at intelligence, and reveal it to him. But leave it to your discretion to do as you think fit in it. All my concern

is, that this daring and foolish project, if carried on, will b a mean of throwing you more into his power than ever But as it will convince you that there can be no hope o a reconciliation, I wish you were actually married, let th cause for the prosecution hinted at be what it will, short o murder or a rape.

Your Hannah was very thankful for your kind present. She heaped a thousand blessings upon you for it. She has Mr. Lovelace's too by this time.

I am pleased with Mr. Hickman, I can tell you:—for he has sent her two guineas by the person who carries Mr. Lovelace's five, as from an unknown hand: nor am I, or you, to know it. But he does a great many things of this sort, and is as silent as the night in his charities; for nobody knows of them till the gratitude of the benefited will not let them be concealed. He is now and then my almoner, and, I believe, always adds to my little benefactions.

But his time is not come to be praised to his face for these things; nor does he seem to want that encouragement.

The man has certainly a good mind. Nor can we expect in one man every good quality. But he is really a silly fellow, my dear, to trouble his head about me, when he sees how much I despise his whole sex; and must of course make a common man look like a fool, were he not to make *himself* look like one, by wishing to pitch his tent so oddly. Our likings and dislikings, as I have often thought, are seldom governed by prudence, or with a view to happiness. The eye, my dear, the wicked eye, has such a strict alliance with the heart—and both have such enmity to the judgment!—What an unequal union, the mind and body! All the senses, like the family at Harlowe Place, in a confederacy against that which would animate, and give honour to the whole, were it allowed its proper precedence.

Permit me, I beseech you, before you go to London, to send you forty-eight guineas. I mention that sum to oblige you, because, by accepting back the two to Hannah, I will hold you indebted to me fifty.—Surely *this* will induce you! You know that I cannot want the money. I told you that

I have near double that sum, and that the half of it is more than my mother knows I am mistress of. You are afraid that my mother will question me on this subject; and then you think I must own the truth. But little as I love equivocation, and little as you would allow of it in your Anna Howe, it is hard if I cannot (were I to be put to it ever so closely) find something to say that would bring me off, and not impeach my veracity. With so little money as you have, what can you do at such a place as London?—You don't know what occasion you may have for messengers, intelligence, and suchlike. If you don't oblige me, I shall not think your stomach so much down as you say it is, and as, in this one particular, I think it ought to be.

As to the state of things between my mother and me, you know enough of her temper, not to need to be told that she never espouses or resents with indifference. Yet will she not remember that I am *her* daughter. No, truly, I am all my *papa's girl.*

She was very sensible, surely, of the violence of my poor father's temper, that she can so long remember *that,* when acts of tenderness and affection seem quite forgotten. Some daughters would be tempted to think that control sat very heavy upon a mother, who can endeavour to exert the power she has over a child, and regret, for years after death, that she had not the same over a husband.

If this manner of expression becomes not me of my mother, the fault will be somewhat extenuated by the love I always bore to my father, and by the reverence I shall ever pay to his memory: for he was a fond father, and perhaps would have been as tender a husband, had not my mother and he been too much of a temper to agree.

The misfortune was, in short, that when *one* was out of humour, the *other* would be so too: yet neither of their tempers *comparatively* bad. Notwithstanding all which, I did not imagine, girl as I was in my father's lifetime, that my mother's part of the yoke sat so heavy upon her neck as she gives me room to think it did, whenever she is pleased to disclaim *her* part of me.

Both parents, as I have often thought, should be very careful, if they would secure to themselves the undivided love of their children, that, of all things, they should avoid such *durable* contentions with each other, as should distress their children in choosing their party, when they would be glad to reverence *both* as they ought.

But here is the thing: there is not a better manager of affairs in the sex than my mother; and I believe a *notable* wife is more impatient of control than an *indolent* one. An indolent one, perhaps, thinks she has something to *compound* for; while women of the other character, I suppose, know too well their own significance to think highly of that of anybody else. All must be their own way. In one word, because they are *useful*, they will be *more* than useful.

I do assure you, my dear, were I a man, and a man who loved my quiet, I would not have one of these managing wives on any consideration. I would make it a matter of serious inquiry beforehand, whether my mistress's qualifications, if I heard she was notable, were *masculine* or *feminine* ones. If indeed I were an indolent supine mortal, who might be in danger of becoming the property of my steward, I would then perhaps choose to marry for the qualifications of a steward.

But setting my mother out of the question, because she *is* my mother, have I not seen how Lady Hartley pranks up herself above all her sex, because she knows how to manage affairs that do not *belong* to her sex to manage? —Affairs that do no credit to her as a woman to understand; *practically*, I mean; for the *theory* of them may not be amiss to be known.

Indeed, my dear, I do not think a *man-woman* a pretty character at all: and, as I said, were I a *man*, I would sooner choose a dove, though it were fit for nothing but, as the play says, to go tame about house, and breed, than a wife that is setting at work (my insignificant self *present* perhaps) every busy hour my never-resting servants, those of the stud not excepted; and who, with a besom in her

ıd, as I may say, would be continually filling me with ırehensions that she wanted to sweep me out of my n house as useless lumber.

Were indeed the mistress of a family (like the wonder- young lady I so *much* and so *justly* admire) to know v to confine herself within her own respectable rounds the needle, the pen, the housekeeper's bills, the dairy her amusement; to see the poor fed from superfluities t would otherwise be wasted, and exert herself in all really useful branches of domestic management; then ıld she move in her proper sphere; then would she der herself *amiably* useful, and *respectably* necessary; n would she become the *mistress*-wheel of the family ıatever you think of your Anna Howe, I would not 'e her be the *master*-wheel], and everybody would love ; as everybody did you, before your insolent brother ne back, flushed with his unmerited acquirements, and ned all things topsy-turvy.

If you *will* be informed of the particulars of our con- ıtion, after you have known in general that *your* unhappy ıir was the subject, why then, I think I must tell you.

Yet how shall I?—I feel my cheek glow with mingled ıme and indignation.—Know then, my dear,—that I ve been—as I may say—that I have been *beaten*—indeed ı true. My mother thought fit to slap my hands to get m me a sheet of a letter she caught me writing to you; ıich I tore, because she should not read it, and burnt before her face.

I know this will trouble you: so spare yourself the pains tell me it does.

Mr. Hickman came in presently after. I would not see n. I am either too much a woman to be beat, or too ch a child to have an humble servant—so I told my ther. What can one oppose but sullens, when it uld be unpardonable so much as to *think* of lifting up nger?

n the Harlowe style, She will be obeyed, she says: l even Mr. Hickman shall be forbid the house, if he

contributes to the carrying on of a correspondence whic she will not suffer to be continued.

Poor man! He stands a whimsical chance between us But he knows he is *sure* of my mother; but not of me. 'Tis easy then for him to choose his party, were it not his inclination to serve you, as it surely *is*. And this makes him a merit with me, which otherwise he would not have had; notwithstanding the good qualities which I have just now acknowledged in his favour. For, my dear, let my faults in other respects be what they may, I will pretend to say, that I have in my own mind those qualities which I praised him for. And if we are to come together, I could for that reason better dispense with them in him.— So if a husband, who has a bountiful-tempered wife, is not a niggard, nor seeks to restrain her, but has an opinion of all she does, that is enough for him: as, on the contrary, if a bountiful-tempered husband has a frugal wife, it is best for both. For one to give, and the other to give, except they have prudence, and are at so good an understanding with each other as to compare notes, they may perhaps put it out of their power to be *just*. Good frugal doctrine, my dear! But this way of putting it is middling the matter between what I have learnt of my mother's *over*-prudent and your *enlarged* notions.—But from doctrine to fact—

I shut myself up all that day; and what little I did eat eat alone. But at night she sent up Kitty with a command upon my obedience, to attend her at supper.

, I went down; but most gloriously in the sullens. YE and NO, were great words with me, to everything s asked, for a good while.

That behaviour, she told me, should not do for her.

Beating should not do with me, I said.

My bold resistance, she told me, had provoked her to sl my hand; and she was sorry to have been so provoke But again insisted that I would either give up my corre pondence absolutely, or let her see all that passed in it.

I must not do either, I told her. It was unsuitable bo

to my inclination and to my honour, at the instigation of base minds to give up a friend in distress.

She rung all the maternal changes upon the words duty, obedience, filial obligation, and so forth.

I told her that a duty too rigorously and unreasonably exacted had been your ruin, if you *were* ruined.

If I were of age to be married, I hope she would think me capable of *making*, or at least of *keeping*, my own friendships; such a one especially as this, with a *woman too*, and one whose friendship she herself, till this distressful point of time, had thought the most useful and edifying that I had ever contracted.

The greater the merit, the worse the action; the finer the talents, the more dangerous the example.

There were other duties, I said, besides the filial one; and I hoped I need not give up a suffering friend, especially at the instigation of those by whom she suffered. I told her that it was very hard to annex such a condition as that to my duty; when I was persuaded that both duties might be performed, without derogating from either; that an unreasonable command (she must excuse me, I must say it, though I were slapped again) was a degree of tyranny: and I could not have expected, that at these years I should be allowed no will, no choice of my own! where a woman only was concerned, and the devilish sex not in the question.

What turned most in favour of her argument was, that I desired to be excused from letting her read all that passes between us. She insisted much upon this: and since, she said, you were in the hands of the most intriguing man in the world, and a man who had made a jest of her favourite Hickman, as she has been told, she knows not what consequences, unthought of by you or me, may flow from such a correspondence.

So you see, my dear, that I fare the worse on Mr. Hickman's account! My *mother* might see all that passes between us, did I not know that it would cramp your spirit, and restrain the freedom of your pen, as it would also the freedom of mine: and were she not moreover so firmly

attached to the contrary side, that inferences, consequenc strained deductions, censures, and constructions the mc partial, would for ever be haled in to tease me, and wou perpetually subject us to the necessity of debating ar canvassing.

Besides, I don't choose that she should know how muc this artful wretch has outwitted, as I may call it, a person much his superior in all the nobler qualities of the huma mind.

The generosity of your heart, and the greatness of you soul, full well I know; but do not offer to dissuade me fro this correspondence.

Mr. Hickman, immediately on the contention abov offered his service; and I accepted of it, as you will see b my last. He thinks, though he has all honour for m mother, that she is unkind to us both. He was pleased t tell me (with an air, as I thought) that he not only *approve* of our correspondence, but admired the steadiness of m friendship; and having no opinion of your *man*, but a grea one of *me*, thinks that my advice or intelligence from tim to time may be of use to you; and on this presumption saic that it would be a thousand pities that you should suffer fo want of either.

Mr. Hickman pleased me in the main of his speech; an it is well the general tenor of it was agreeable; otherwise can tell him, I should have reckoned with him for his wor *approve*; for it is a style I have not yet permitted him t talk to me in. And you see, my dear, what these men ar —no sooner do they find that you have favoured them wit the power of doing you an agreeable service, but they tak upon them to *approve*, forsooth, of your actions! By whic is implied a right to *disapprove*, if they think fit.

I have told my mother how much you wish to be recon ciled to your relations, and how independent you are upo Lovelace.

Mark the end of the latter assertion, she says. And as t reconciliation, she knows that nothing will do (and wi have it, that nothing *ought* to do), but your returning back

without presuming to condition with them. And this if you do, she says, will best show your independence on Lovelace.

You see, my dear, what your duty is, in my mother's opinion.

I suppose your next, directed to Mr. Hickman, at his own house, will be from London.

Heaven preserve you in honour and safety, is my prayer.

What you do for change of clothes, I cannot imagine.

It is amazing to me what your relations can mean by distressing you, as they seem resolved to do. I see they will throw you into his arms, whether you will or not.

I send this by Robert, for despatch-sake: and can only repeat the hitherto rejected offer of my best services. Adieu, my dearest friend. Believe me ever

Your affectionate and faithful

ANNA HOWE.

—o—

LETTER LVI.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Tuesday, April 20.

I SHOULD think myself utterly unworthy of your friendship did my own concerns, heavy as they are, so engross me that I could not find leisure for a few lines to declare to my beloved friend my sincere disapprobation of her conduct, in an instance where she is so *generously* faulty, that the consciousness of that very generosity may hide from her the fault, which I, more than any other, have reason to deplore, as being the unhappy occasion of it.

You know, you say, that your account of the contentions between your mother and you will trouble me; and so you bid me spare myself the pains to tell you that they do.

You did not use, my dear, to forbid me thus *beforehand*. You were wont to say you loved me the better for my expostulations with you on that acknowledged warmth and

quickness of your temper which your own good sense taug you to be apprehensive of. What though I have so misc ably fallen, and am unhappy, if ever I had any judgmei worth regarding, it is now as much worth as ever, becau I can give it as freely against myself as against anybod else. And shall I not, when there seems to be an infectio in my fault, and that it leads you likewise to resolve to carr on a correspondence against prohibition, expostulate wit you upon it; when whatever consequences flow from you disobedience, they but widen my error, which is as the evi root, from which such sad branches spring?

The mind that can glory in being capable of so noble, s firm, so unshaken friendship as that of my dear Miss Howe a friendship which no casualty or distress can lessen, bu which increases with the misfortunes of its friend—such a mind must be above taking amiss the well-meant admoni tions of that distinguished friend. I will not therefor apologise for my freedom on this subject: and the less nee I, when that freedom is the result of an affection in the ver instance, so *absolutely* disinterested, that it tends to depriv myself of the only comfort left me.

Your acknowledged sullens; your tearing from yo mother's hands the letter she thought she had a right see, and burning it as you own before her face; yo refusal to see the man who is so willing to obey you f the sake of your unhappy friend, and this purely to v your mother; can you think, my dear, upon this bri recapitulation of hardly one half of the faulty particula you give, that these faults are excusable in one who so w knows her duty?

Your mother had a good opinion of me once: is not th a reason why she should be more regarded now, when have, *as she believes,* so deservedly forfeited it? A prejudi in favour is as hard to be totally overcome as a prejudi in disfavour. In what a strong light, then, must that err appear to her, that should so totally turn her heart agai me, herself not a principal in the case?

There are other duties, you say, besides the filial dut

but that, my dear, must be a duty prior to all other duties; a duty anterior, as I may say, to your very birth: and what duty ought not to give way to that, when they come in competition?

You are persuaded that the duty to your friend, and the filial duty, may be performed without derogating from either. Your *mother* thinks otherwise. What is the conclusion to be drawn from these premises?

When your mother sees how much *I* suffer in my reputation from the step I have taken, from whom she and all the world expected better things, how much reason has she to be watchful over you! One evil draws on another after it; and how knows she, or anybody, where it may stop?

Does not the person who will vindicate, or seek to extenuate, a faulty step in another [in this light must your mother look upon the matter in question between her and you], give an indication either of a culpable will, or a weak judgment; and may not she apprehend, that the censorious will think, that such a one might probably have equally failed under the same *inducements* and *provocations*, to *use your own words*, as applied to me in a former letter?

Can there be a stronger instance in human life than mine has so early furnished, within a few months past (not to mention the uncommon provocations to it, which I have met with), of the necessity of the continuance of a watchful parent's care over a daughter: let that daughter have obtained ever so great a reputation for her prudence?

Is not the space from sixteen to twenty-one that which requires this care more than at any time of a young woman's life? For in that period do we not generally attract the eyes of the other sex, and become the subject of their addresses, and not seldom of their attempts? And is not that the period in which our conduct or misconduct gives us a reputation or disreputation, that almost inseparably accompanies us throughout our whole future lives?

Are we not likewise then most in danger from *ourselves*, because of the distinction with which we are apt to behold particulars of that sex.

And when our dangers multiply both from *within* and *without*, do not our parents know that their vigilance ought to be doubled? And shall that necessary increase of care sit uneasy upon us because we are grown up to stature and womanhood?

Will you tell me, if so, what is the precise stature and age at which a good child shall conclude herself absolved from the duty she owes to a parent?—And at which a parent, after the example of the dams of the brute creation, is to lay aside all care and tenderness for her offspring?

Is it so hard for you, my dear, to be treated like a child? And can you not think it is hard for a good parent to imagine herself under the unhappy *necessity* of so treating her woman-grown daughter?

Do you think if your mother had been *you*, and you your *mother*, and *your* daughter had struggled with you as you did with her, that you would not have been as apt as your mother was to have slapped your daughter's hands, to have made her quit her hold, and give up the prohibited letter?

Your mother told you with great truth, that you *provoked* her to this harshness; and it was a great condescension in her (and not taken notice of by you as it deserved) to say that she was *sorry for it*.

At *every* age on this side matrimony (for then we come under another sort of protection, though that is far from abrogating the filial duty) it will be found that the wings of our parents are our most necessary and most effectual safeguard from the vultures, the hawks, the kites, and other villanous birds of prey that hover over us with a view to seize and destroy us the first time we are caught wandering out of the eye or care of our watchful and natural guardians and protectors.

Hard as you may suppose it, to be denied the *continuance* of a correspondence once so much approved, even by the venerable denier; yet, if your mother think my fault to be of such a nature, as that a correspondence with me will cast a shade upon your reputation, all my own friends having given me up—that hardship is to be submitted to. And

it not make her the more strenuous to support her own
on, when she sees the first fruits of this tenaciousness
ur side is to be *gloriously in the sullens*, as you call it,
a disobedient opposition?
now that you have a humorous meaning in that ex-
on, and that this turn, in most cases, gives a delightful
ancy both to your conversation and correspondence;
deed, my dear, *this* case will not bear humour.
ll you give me leave to add to this tedious expostula-
hat I by no means approve of some of the things you
in relation to the manner in which your father and
r lived—at times lived—only *at times*, I daresay,
h perhaps too often.
ır mother is answerable to *anybody*, rather than to her
for whatever was wrong in her conduct, if anything
rong, towards Mr. Howe: a gentleman, of whose
ry I will only say that it *ought* to be revered by you—
et, should you not examine yourself, whether your dis-
re at your mother had no part in your revived rever-
or your father at the time you wrote?
one is perfect: and although your mother may not be
ht to remember disagreeableness against the departed,
ould you not want to be reminded on *whose* account,
n *what* occasion, she remembered them. You cannot
nor ought you to *attempt* to judge, of what might
assed between both, to embitter and to keep awake
eeable remembrances in the survivor.

—o—

LETTER LVII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

[In continuation.]

r this subject must not be pursued. Another might,
more pleasure (though not with more approbation),
one of your lively excursions. It is upon the high airs
ve yourself upon the word *approve*.

How comes it about, I wonder, that a young lady so n for a predominating generosity, should not be unifor generous? That your generosity should fail in an inst where policy, prudence, gratitude, would not permit i fail? Mr. Hickman (as you confess) has indeed a wo mind. If I had not long ago known that, he would n have found an advocate in me for my Anna Howe's fa to him. Often and often have I been concerned, wh was your happy guest, to see him, after a conversatio which he had well supported his part in your absence, at once into silence the moment you came into compan

I have told you of this before: and I believe I hinte you once, that the superciliousness you put on *only* to was capable of a construction, which at the time would very little gratified your pride to have had made; sin would have been as much in *his* favour, as in *your* disfa

Mr. Hickman, my dear, is a *modest* man. I never modest man, but I am sure (if he has not wanted op tunities) that he has a treasure in his mind, which req nothing but the *key of encouragement* to unlock it, to n him shine—while a confident man, who, to *be* confi must think as meanly of his company as highly of him enters with magisterial airs upon any subject; and dep ing upon his assurance to bring himself off when found talks of more than he is master of.

But a *modest* man!—Oh, my dear, shall not a modest wo distinguish and wish to consort with a modest man? man, *before* whom, and *to* whom, she may open her secure of his good opinion of all she says, and of his and polite regard for her judgment? and who must there inspire her with an agreeable self-confidence.

What a lot have I drawn!—We are all indeed apt to teachers—but surely I am better enabled to talk, to w upon these subjects, than ever I was. But I will ba *myself*, if possible, from an address which, when I beg write, I was determined to confine wholly to your own ticular.

My dearest, dearest friend, how ready are you to te

what *others* should do, and even what a *mother* should have done! But indeed you once, I remember, advanced, that as different attainments required different talents to master them, so, in the writing way, a person might not be a bad critic upon the works of others, although he might himself be unable to write with excellence. But will you permit me to account for all this readiness of finding fault, by placing it to human nature, which, being sensible of the defects of human nature (that is to say, of its *own* defects), loves to be *correcting?* But in exercising that talent, chooses rather to turn its eye *outward* than *inward?* In other words, to employ itself rather in the *outdoor* search, than in the *indoor* examination.

And here give me leave to add (and yet it is with tender reluctance), that although you say very pretty things of notable wives; and although I join with you in opinion, that husbands may have as many inconveniences to encounter *with*, as conveniences to boast *of*, from women of that character; yet Lady Hartley perhaps would have had milder treatment from your pen, had it not been dipped in gall with a mother in your eye.

As to the money you so generously and repeatedly offer, don't be angry with me, if I again say, that I am very desirous that you should be able to aver, without the least qualifying or reserve, that nothing of that sort has passed between us. I know your mother's strong way of putting the *question she is intent upon* having answered. But yet I promise that I will be obliged to nobody but you, when I have occasion.

—o—

LETTER LVIII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

[In continuation.]

And now, my dear, a few words as to the prohibition laid upon you; a subject that I have frequently touched upon, but cursorily, because I was afraid to trust myself

with it, knowing that my judgment, if I did, would condemn my practice.

You command me not to attempt to dissuade you from this correspondence; and you tell me how kindly Mr. Hickman approves of it; and how obliging he is to me, to permit it to be carried on under cover to him—but this does not quite satisfy me.

I am a very bad casuist; and the pleasure I take in writing to you, who are the only one to whom I can disburden my mind, may make me, as I have hinted, very partial to my own wishes: else, if it were not an artful evasion beneath an open and frank heart to wish to be complied with, I would be glad methinks to be permitted still to write to you; and only to have such *occasional returns* by Mr. Hickman's pen, as well as cover, as might set me right when I am wrong, confirm me when right, and guide me where I doubt. This would enable me to proceed in the difficult path before me with more assuredness. For whatever I suffer from the censures of others, if I can preserve your good opinion, I shall not be altogether unhappy, let what will befall me.

And indeed, my dear, I know not how to *forbear* writing. I have now no other employment or diversion. And I must write on, although I were not to send it to anybody. You have often heard me own the advantages I have found from writing down everything of moment that befalls me; and of all I *think*, and of all I *do*, that may be of future use to me; for, besides that this helps to form one to a style, and opens and expands the ductile mind, every one will find that many a good thought evaporates in thinking; many a good resolution goes off, driven out of memory perhaps by some other not so good. But when I set down what I *will* do, or what I *have* done, on this or that occasion; the resolution or action is before me either to be adhered to, withdrawn or amended; and I have entered into *compact* with myself, as I may say; having given it under my own hand to *improve*, rather than to go *backward*, as I live longer.

I would willingly, therefore, write to *you*, if I *might*; the

ather as it would be the more inspiriting to have some end n view in what I write; some friend to please; besides nerely seeking to gratify my passion for scribbling.

But why, if your mother will permit our correspondence n communicating to her all that passes in it, and if she ould condescend to one only condition, may it not be mplied with?

Would she not, do you think, my dear, be prevailed upon have the communication made to her, *in confidence?*

If there were any prospect of a reconciliation with my iends, I should not have so much regard for my *pride,* as be afraid of *anybody's* knowing how much I have been *twitted,* as you call it. I would in *that* case (when I had ft Mr. Lovelace) acquaint your mother, and all my own iends, with the whole of my story. It would behove me to do, for my own reputation, and for their satisfaction.

But if I have no such prospect, what will the communicaon of my reluctance to go away with Mr. Lovelace, and his arts to frighten me away, avail me? Your mother as hinted that my friends would insist upon my returning me to them (as a proof of the truth of my plea) to be isposed of, without condition, at their pleasure. If I rupled this, my brother would rather triumph over me, an keep my secret. Mr. Lovelace, whose pride already ill brooks my regrets for meeting him (when he thinks, I had not, I must have been Mr. Solmes's wife), would rhaps treat me with indignity: and thus, deprived of all fuge and protection, I should become the scoff of men of trigue; and be thought, with too great an appearance of ason, a disgrace to my sex—while that avowed love, *howr indiscreetly shown,* which is followed by marriage, will d more excuses made for it, *than generally it ought to find.*

But if your mother will receive the communication in nfidence, pray show her all that I have written, or shall rite. If my past conduct in that case shall not be found deserve *heavy* blame, I shall then perhaps have the benefit *her* advice, as well as *yours.* And if, after a re-establishent in her favour, I shall wilfully deserve blame for the

time to come, I will be content to be denied yours as w
as hers for ever.

As to cramping my spirit, as you call it (were I to
down to write what I know your mother must see), th
my dear, is already cramped. And do not think so u
handsomely of your mother, as to fear that she would ma
partial constructions against me. Neither you nor I c
doubt, but that, had she been left unprepossessedly to h
self, she would have shown favour to me. And so, I daresa
would my uncle Antony. Nay, my dear, I can extend n
charity still farther: for I am sometimes of opinion, th
were my brother and sister *absolutely certain* that they h
so far ruined me in the opinion of both my uncles, as th
they need not be apprehensive of my clashing with th
interests, they would not oppose a pardon, although th
might not wish a reconciliation; especially if I would ma
a few sacrifices to them: which, I assure you, I should
inclined to make were I wholly free, and independent
this man. You know I never valued myself upon worl
acquisitions, but as they enlarged my power to do thir
I loved to do. And if I were denied the power, I must,
I now do, curb my inclination.

Do not however think me guilty of an affectation in wl
I have said of my brother and sister. Severe enough I
sure it is, in the most favourable sense. And an indiffer
person will be of opinion, that *they* are much better warran
than ever, for the sake of the family honour, to seek to r
me in the favour of all my friends.

But to the former topic—try, my dear, if your mot
will, upon the condition above given, permit our cor
spondence, on seeing all we write. But if she will n
what a selfishness would there be in my love to you, wer
to wish you to forego your duty for my sake?

And now one word as to the freedom I have treated
with in this tedious expostulatory address. I presume u
your forgiveness of it, because few friendships are foun
on such a basis as ours: which is, 'freely to *give* repr
'and thankfully to *receive* it as occasions arise; that

'either may have opportunity to clear up mistakes, to 'acknowledge and amend errors, as well in behaviour as in 'words and deeds; and to rectify and confirm each other 'in the judgment each shall form upon persons, things, and 'circumstances.' And all this upon the following consideration; 'that it is much more eligible, as well as honourable, 'to be corrected with the gentleness that may be expected 'from an undoubted friend, than, by continuing either blind 'or wilful, to expose ourselves to the censures of an envious 'and perhaps malignant world.'

But it is as needless, I daresay, to remind you of this, as it is to *repeat* my request, so often repeated, that you will not, in your turn, spare the follies and the faults of

Your ever affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

Subjoined to the above.

I said that I would avoid writing anything of my own particular affairs in the above address if I could.

I will write one letter more, to inform you how I stand with this man. But, my dear, you must permit that one, and your answer to it (for I want your advice upon the contents of mine) and the copy of one I have written to my aunt, to be the last that shall pass between us, while the prohibition continues.

I fear, I very much fear, that my unhappy situation will draw me in to be guilty of evasion, of little affectations, and of curvings from the plain simple truth which I was wont to delight in, and prefer to every other consideration. But allow me to say, and this for your sake, and in order to lessen your mother's fears of any ill consequences that she might apprehend from our correspondence, that if I am at any time guilty of a failure in these respects, I will not *go on in it* but endeavour to recover my lost ground, that I may not bring error into habit.

I have deferred going to town, at Mrs. Sorlings's earnest

request. But have fixed my removal to Monday, as I shall acquaint you in my next.

I have already made a progress in that next; but having an unexpected opportunity, will send this by itself.

—o—

LETTER LIX.

Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

Friday Morning, April 21.

My mother will not comply with your condition, my dear. I hinted it to her, as from myself. But the *Harlowes* (excuse me) have got her entirely in with them. It is a scheme of mine, she told me, formed to draw her into your party against your parents. Which, for your own sake she is very careful about.

Don't be so much concerned about my mother and me once more, I beg of you. We shall do well enough together —now a falling out, now a falling in.

It used to be so, when *you* were not in the question.

Yet do I give you my sincere thanks for every line of your reprehensive letters; which I intend to read as often as I find my temper rises.

I will freely own, however, that I winced a little at first reading them. But I see that, on every re-perusal, I shall love and honour you still more, if possible, than before.

Yet I think I have one advantage over you; and which I will hold through this letter, and through all my future letters; that is, that I will treat you as freely as you treat me; and yet will never think an *apology necessary to you for my freedom.*

But that you so think with respect to me is the effect of your gentleness of temper, with a little sketch of implied reflection on the warmth of mine. Gentleness in a woman you hold to be no fault: nor do I a little due or provoked warmth. But what is this, but praising on both sides what

neither of us can help, nor perhaps *wish* to help? You can no more go out of your road, than I can go out of mine. It would be a pain to either to do so. What then is it in either's approving of her own natural bias, but making a virtue of necessity?

But one observation I will add, that were *your* character, and *my* character, to be truly drawn, mine would be allowed to be the most natural. Shades and lights are equally necessary in a fine picture. Yours would be surrounded with such a flood of brightness, with such a glory, that it would indeed dazzle; but leave one heartless to imitate it.

Oh, may you not suffer from a base world for your gentleness; while my temper, by its warmth, keeping all imposition at a distance, though less amiable in general, affords me not reason, as I have mentioned heretofore, to wish to make an exchange with you!

I should indeed be inexcusable to open my lips by way of contradiction to my mother, had I such a fine spirit as yours to deal with. Truth is truth, my dear! Why should narrowness run away with the praises due to a noble expansion of heart? If everybody would speak out, as I do (that is to say, give praise where only praise is due; dispraise where due likewise), *shame*, if not *principle*, would mend the world—nay, shame would *introduce* principle in a generation or two. Very true, my dear. Do you apply. I dare not.—For I *fear* you, almost as much as I *love* you.

I will give you an instance, nevertheless, which will anew demonstrate that none but very generous and noble-minded people ought to be implicitly obeyed. You know what I said above, that *truth is truth.*

Inconveniences will sometimes arise from having to do with persons of modesty and scrupulousness. Mr. Hickman, you say, is a *modest* man. He put your corrective packet into my hand with a very fine bow, and a self-satisfied air [*we'll consider what you say of this honest man by and by, my dear*]: his strut was not gone off, when in came my mother as I was reading it.

When some folk find their anger has made them consi-

derable, they will be always angry, or seeking occasion for anger.

Why, now, Mr. Hickman—why, now, Nancy [as I wa huddling in the packet between my gown and my stays, a her entrance]. You have a letter brought you this instan —while the *modest* man, with his pausing bravings, Mac da—Mad-dam, looked as if he knew not whether he ha best to run, and leave me and my mother to fight it ou or to stand his ground, and see fair play.

It would have been poor to tell a lie for it. She flun away. I went out at the opposite door, to read the cor tents; leaving Mr. Hickman to exercise his *white tee* upon his thumb-nails.

When I had read your letters, I went to find out m mother. I told her the generous contents, and that yc desired that the prohibition might be adhered to. I pro posed your condition, as for myself; and was rejected, a above.

She supposed she was finely painted between tw 'young creatures, who had more wit than prudence:' ar instead of being prevailed upon by the generosity of yo sentiments, made use of your opinion only to confirm h own, and renewed her prohibitions, charging me to retu no other answer, but that she *did* renew them: adding, tha they should stand till your relations were reconciled t you; hinting as if she had *engaged for as much:* an expected my compliance.

I thought of your reprehensions, and was *meek,* thoug not pleased. And let me tell you, my dear, that as lon as I can satisfy my own mind that good is intended, an that it is hardly possible that evil should ensue from ou correspondence—as long as I know that this prohibitio proceeds originally from the same spiteful minds whic have been the occasion of all these mischiefs—as long as know that it is not your fault if your relations are nc reconciled to you, and that upon conditions which n reasonable people would refuse—you must give me leav with all deference to your judgment, and to your excellen

lessons (*which would reach almost every case of this kind but the present*), to insist upon your writing to me, and that minutely, as if this prohibition had not been laid.

It is not from humour, from perverseness, that I insist upon this. I cannot express how much my heart is in your concerns. And you must, in short, allow me to think, that if I can do you service by writing, I shall be better justified in *continuing* to write, than my mother is in her prohibition.

But yet, to satisfy you all I can, I will as seldom return answers, while the interdict lasts, as may be consistent with my notions of friendship, and with the service I owe you, and can do you.

As to your expedient of writing by Hickman [and now, my dear, your *modest man* comes in: and as you love modesty in that sex, I will do my endeavour, by holding him at a proper distance, to keep him in your favour], I know what you mean by it, my sweet friend. It is to make that man significant with me. As to the correspondence, THAT *shall* go on, I do assure you, be as scrupulous as you please—so that *that* will not suffer if I do *not* close with your proposal as to him.

I must tell you, that I think it will be honour enough for him to have his name made use of so frequently betwixt us. This, of itself, is placing a confidence in him, that will make him walk bolt upright, and display his *white hand* and his *fine diamond ring;* and most mightily lay down his services, *and* his pride to oblige, *and* his diligence, *and* his fidelity, *and* his contrivances to keep our secret, *and* his excuses, *and* his evasions to my mother, when challenged by her; with fifty *and's* beside: and will it not moreover give him pretence and excuse oftener than ever to pad-nag it hither to good Mrs. Howe's fair daughter?

But to admit him into my company tête-à-tête, and into my closet, as often as I would wish to write to you, I only to dictate to his pen—my mother all the time supposing that I was going to be heartily in love with him—to make him master of my sentiments, and of my *heart*, as I may say, when I write to you—indeed, my dear, I *won't*. Nor, were

I married to the best HE in England, would I honour hi with the communication of my correspondences.

No, my dear, it is sufficient, surely, for him to parade the character of our letter-conveyer, and to be honoured in cover, and never fear but, modest as you think him, he w make enough of that.

You are always blaming me for want of generosity to tl man, and for abuse of power. But I profess, my dear, I ca not tell how to help it. Do, dear, now, let me spread n plumes a little, and now and then make myself feared. Tl is my time, you know, since it would be no more to m credit than to *his*, to give myself those airs when I a married. He has a joy when I am pleased with him that would not know, but for the pain my displeasure gives hin

Men, no more than *women*, know how to make a modera use of power. Is not that seen every day, from the prince the peasant? If I do not make Hickman quake now ar then, he will endeavour to make me fear. All the animals the creation are more or less in a state of hostility with ea other. The wolf, that runs away from a lion, will devour lamb the next moment. I remember that I was once enraged at a game chicken that was continually pecking another (a poor humble one, as I thought him), that I h the offender caught, and without more ado, in a *pet of hum nity*, wrung his neck off. What followed this executio Why that other grew insolent as soon as *his* insulter w gone, and was continually pecking at one or two under *hi* Peck and be hanged, said I,—I might as well have preserv the first, for I see it is the *nature of the beast*.

Excuse my flippancies. I wish I were with you. I wou make you smile in the midst of your gravest airs, as I us to do. Oh, that you had accepted of my offer to attend yo but *nothing that I offer* will you accept.—Take care!—Y will make me very angry with you: and when I am, y know I value nobody: for, dearly as I love you, I must b and cannot always help it,

Your saucy

ANNA HOWE.

LETTER LX.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Friday, April 21.

MR. LOVELACE communicated to me this morning early, from his intelligencer, the news of my brother's scheme. I like him the better for making very light of it, and for his treating it with contempt. And indeed, had I not had the hint of it from you, I should have suspected it to be some contrivance of his, in order to hasten me to town, where he has long wished to be himself.

He read me the passage in that Leman's letter, which is pretty much to the effect of what you wrote to me from Miss Lloyd; with this addition, that one Singleton, a master of a Scots vessel, is the man who is to be the principal in this act of violence.

I have seen him. He has been twice entertained at Harlowe Place, as my brother's friend. He has the air of a very bold and fearless man, and I fancy it must be *his* project; as my brother, I suppose, talks to everybody of the rash step I have taken, for he did not spare me before he had this seeming reason to censure me.

This Singleton lives at Leith; so perhaps I am to be carried to my brother's house not far from that port.

Putting these passages together, I am not a little apprehensive that the design, lightly as Mr. Lovelace, from his fearless temper, treats it, may be attempted to be carried into execution; and of the consequences that may attend it, if it be.

I asked Mr. Lovelace, seeing him so frank and cool, what he would advise me to do.

Shall I ask *you*, Madam, what are your own thoughts? —Why I return the question, said he, is because you have been so very earnest that I should leave you as soon as you are in London, that I know not what to propose without offending you.

My opinion is, said I, that I should studiously conce myself from the knowledge of everybody but Miss How and that you should leave me out of hand; since they w certainly conclude that where *one* is, the *other* is not f off: and it is easier to trace *you* than *me*.

You would not surely wish, said he, to fall into yo brother's hands by such a violent measure as this? I pr pose not to throw myself officiously in their way; b should they have reason to think I avoided them, wou not that whet their diligence to find you, and their coura to attempt to carry you off, and subject me to insults th no man of spirit can bear?

Lord bless me! said I, to what has this one fatal st that I have been betrayed into——

Dearest Madam, let me beseech you to forbear this har language, when you see by this new scheme, how det mined they were upon carrying their old ones, had you n been *betrayed*, as you call it. Have I offered to defy t laws of society, as this brother of yours must do, if anythi be intended by this project? I hope you will be pleased observe that there are as violent and as wicked enterpris as myself. But this is so very wild a project, that I thi there can be no room for apprehensions from it. I kn your brother well. When at college, he had always romantic turn: but never had a head for anything but puzzle and confound himself. A half invention, and whole conceit; but not master of talents to do hims good, or others harm, but as those others gave him t power by their own folly.

This is very volubly run off, sir!—But violent spir are but too much alike; at least in their methods of reser ing. You will not presume to make yourself a less innoce man, surely, who had determined to brave my whole fami in person, if my folly had not saved *you* the rashness, a *them* the insult——

Dear Madam!—Still must it be *folly, rashness!*—It as impossible for you to think tolerably of anybody *out* your own family, as it is for any one *in it* to *deserve* yo

love! Forgive me, dearest creature! If I did not love you as never man loved a woman, I might appear more indifferent to preferences so undeservedly made. But let me ask you, Madam, what have you borne from *me?* What cause have I given you to treat me with so much severity and so little confidence? And what have you not borne from *them?* Malice and ill will, indeed, sitting in judgment upon my character, may not give sentence in my favour: but what *of your own knowledge* have you against me?

Spirited questions, were they not, my dear?—And they were asked with as spirited an air. I was startled. But I was resolved not to desert myself.

Is this a *time,* Mr. Lovelace, is this a *proper* occasion taken, to give yourself these high airs to me, a young creature destitute of protection? It is a surprising question you ask me—Had I aught against you *of my own knowledge* —I can tell you, sir—and away I would have flung.

He snatched my hand, and besought me not to leave him in displeasure. He pleaded his passion for me, and my severity to him, and partiality for those from whom I had suffered so much; and whose intended violence, he said, was now the subject of our deliberation.

I was forced to hear him.

You condescended, dearest creature, said he, to ask my advice. It was very easy, give me leave to say, to advise you what to do. I hope I may, on this *new* occasion, speak without offence, *notwithstanding your former injunctions.*— You see that there can be no hope of reconciliation with your relations. Can you, Madam, consent to honour with your hand a wretch whom you have never yet obliged with one *voluntary* favour!

What a *recriminating,* what a *reproachful way,* my dear, was this, of putting a question of this nature!

I expected not from him, at the time, and just as I was very angry with him, either the question or the manner. I am ashamed to recollect the confusion I was thrown into; all your advice in my head at the moment: yet his words so prohibitory. He confidently seemed to enjoy my confusion

[*indeed, my dear, he knows not what respectful love is!*], and gazed upon me as if he would have looked me through.

He was still more declarative afterwards, indeed, as I shall mention by and by: but it was half extorted from him.

My heart struggled violently between resentment and shame, to be thus teased by one who seemed to have all *his* passions at command, at a time when I had very little over *mine!* till at last I burst into tears, and was going from him in high disgust: when, throwing his arms about me, with an air, however, the most tenderly respectful, he gave a *stupid* turn to the subject.

It was far from his heart, he said, to take so much *advantage* of the *streight*, which the discovery of my brother's foolish project had brought me into, as to renew, *without my permission*, a proposal which I had hitherto discountenanced, and which for *that* reason——

And then he came with his *half sentences*, apologising for what he had not so much as *half proposed*.

Surely he had not the insolence to *intend* to tease me, to see if I could be brought to speak what became me not to speak. But whether he had or not, it *did* tease me; insomuch that my very heart was fretted, and I broke out, at last, into fresh tears, and a declaration that I was very unhappy. And just then recollecting how like a tame fool I stood with his arms about me, I flung from him with indignation. But he seized my hand, as I was going out of the room, and upon his knees besought my stay for one moment: and then, in words the most clear and explicit, tendered himself to my acceptance, as the most effectual means to disappoint my brother's scheme, and set all right.

But what could I say to this?—Extorted from him, as it seemed to me, rather as the effect of his compassion than his love? What *could* I say? I paused, I looked silly—I am *sure* I looked very silly. He suffered me to pause, and look silly; *waiting for* me *to say something:* and at last (ashamed of my confusion, and aiming to make an *excuse for it*) I told him that I desired he would avoid such measures as might add to the uneasiness which it must be visible to him

I had, when he reflected upon the irreconcilableness of my riends, and upon what might follow from this unaccountable roject of my brother.

He promised to be governed by me in everything. And gain the wretch, instead of pressing his former question, ked me, *If I forgave him for the humble suit he had made me?* What had I to do but to try for a palliation of my nfusion, since it served me not?

I told him I had hopes it would not be long before Mr. orden arrived; and doubted not that that gentleman ould be the readier to engage in my favour, when he found at I made no other use of *his* (Mr. Lovelace's) assistance, an to free myself from the addresses of a man so dis-reeable to me as Mr. Solmes: I must therefore wish that erything might remain as it was till I could hear from y cousin.

This, although teased by him as I was, was not, you see, y dear, a *denial.* But he must throw himself into a heat, ther than try to persuade; which any other man in his uation, I should think, would have done: and this rmth obliged me to adhere to my seeming negative.

This was what he said, with a vehemence that must rden any woman's mind, who had a spirit above being ghted into passiveness—

Good God! and will you, Madam, still resolve to show : that I am to hope for no share in your favour, while y the remotest prospect remains that you will be received my bitterest enemies, at the price of my utter rejection?

This was what I returned, with warmth, and with a ving art *too*—You have seen, Mr. Lovelace, how much r brother's violence can affect me: but you will be staken if you let loose yours upon me, with a thought of rifying me into measures the contrary of which you have quiesced with.

He only besought me to suffer his *future actions* to speak him; and if I saw him worthy of any favour, that I uld not let him be the *only* person within my knowledge o was not entitled to my consideration.

You refer to a *future time*, Mr. Lovelace, so do I, for the *future proof* of a merit you seem to think for the *past time* wanting: and *justly* you think so. And I was again going from him.

One word more he begged me to hear—He was determined studiously to avoid all mischief, and every step that might lead to mischief, let my brother's proceedings, short of a violence upon my person, be what they would: but if any attempt that should extend to that were to be made, would I have him to be a quiet spectator of my being seized, or carried back, or on board, by this Singleton; or, in case of extremity, was he not permitted to stand up in my defence?

Stand up in my defence, Mr. Lovelace!—I should be very miserable were there to be a call for that. But do you think I might not be *safe* and *private* in London? By your friend's description of the widow's house, I should think I might be safe there.

The widow's house, he replied, as described by his friend, being a *back house within a front one*, and *looking to a garden, rather than to a street*, had the *appearance* of privacy: but if, when there, it was not approved, it would be easy to find another more to my liking—though, as to his part, the method he would advise should be, to write to my uncle Harlowe, as one of my trustees, and wait the issue of it here at Mrs. Sorlings's, fearlessly directing it to be answered *hither*. To be afraid of little spirits was but to encourage insults, he said. The substance of the letter should be, 'To 'demand as a right, what they would refuse if requested as a 'courtesy: to acknowledge that I had put myself [too well, 'he said, did their treatment justify me] into the protec- 'tion of the *ladies* of his family [by whose orders, and 'Lord M.'s, he himself would appear to act]: but that 'upon my own terms, which were such that I was under 'no obligation to those ladies for the favour; it being no 'more than they would have granted to any one of my sex, 'equally distressed.' If I approved not of this method, happy should he think himself, he said, if I would honour him with the opportunity of making such a claim in his

own name—but this was a point [with his *but's* again in the same breath!] that *he durst but just touch upon.* He hoped, however, that I would think their violence a sufficient inducement for me to take such a wished-for resolution.

Inwardly vexed, I told him that he himself had proposed to leave me when I was in town; that I expected he would: and that, when I was known to be absolutely independent, I should consider what to write, and what to do: but that while he was with me, I neither would nor could.

He would be very sincere with me, he said: this project of my brother's had changed the face of things. He must, before he left me, see whether I should or should not approve of the London widow and her family, if I chose to go thither. They might be people whom my brother might buy. But if he saw they were persons of integrity, he then might go for a day or two, or so. But he must needs say, he could not leave me longer at a time.

Do you propose, sir, said I, to take up your lodgings in the house where I shall lodge?

He did *not,* he said, as he knew the use I intended to make of his absence, and my punctilio—and yet the house where he had lodgings was new-fronting, and not in condition to receive him: but he could go to his friend Belford's, in Soho; or perhaps he might reach to the same gentleman's house at Edgware, over night, and return on the mornings, till he had reason to think this wild project of my brother's laid aside. But to no greater distance till then should he care to venture.

The result of all was, to set out on Monday next for town. I hope it will be in a happy hour.

Cl. Harlowe.

LETTER LXI.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Friday, April 21.

[As it was not probable that the Lady could give so particular an account of her own confusion, in the affecting scene she mentions on Mr. Lovelace's offering himself to her acceptance, the following extracts are made from his letter of the above date.]

And now, Belford, what wilt thou say, if, like the fly buzzing about the bright taper, I had like to have singed the silken wings of my liberty? Never was man in greater danger of being caught in his own snares: all my views anticipated; all my schemes untried; the admirable creature not brought to town; nor one effort made to know if she be really angel or woman.

I offered myself to her acceptance, with a suddenness, 'tis true, that gave her no time to wrap herself in reserves; and in terms *less tender* than *fervent*, tending to upbraid her for her past indifference, and to remind her of her injunctions: for it was the fear of her brother, not her love of me, that had inclined her to dispense with those injunctions.

I never beheld so sweet a confusion. What a glory to the pencil, could it do justice to it, and to the mingled impatience which visibly informed every feature of the most meaning and most beautiful face in the world! She hemmed twice or thrice: her look, now so charmingly silly, then so sweetly significant; till at last the lovely teaser, teased by my hesitating expectation of her answer, out of all power of articulate speech, burst into tears, and was turning from me with precipitation, when, presuming to fold her in my happy arms—Oh, think not, best beloved of my heart, said I, think not, that this motion, which you may believe to be so contrary to your *former injunctions*, proceeds from a design to avail myself of the cruelty of your relations: if I have *disobliged* you by it (and you know with what *respect-*

ul tenderness I have presumed to hint it), it shall be my ıtmost care for the future—there I stopped——

Then she spoke, but with vexation—I am—I am *very* ınhappy—tears trickling down her crimson cheeks, and ıer sweet face, as my arms still encircled the finest waist ı the world, sinking upon my shoulder; the dear creature o absent that she knew not the honour she permitted me.

But why, but why unhappy, my dearest life? said I:— ll the gratitude that ever overflowed the heart of the most bliged of men——

Justice to myself there stopped my mouth: for what *ratitude* did I owe her for obligations so involuntary?

Then recovering herself, and her usual reserves, and truggling to free herself from my clasping arms, How now, ir! said she, with a cheek more indignantly glowing, and yes of fiercer lustre.

I gave way to her angry struggle; but absolutely over- ome by so charming a display of innocent confusion, I aught hold of her hand as she was flying from me, and neeling at her feet, O my angel, said I (quite destitute of eserve, and hardly knowing the tenor of my own speech; nd had a parson been there, I had certainly been a gone nan), receive the vows of your faithful Lovelace. Make im yours, and only yours, for ever. This will answer every nd. Who will dare to form plots and stratagems against ıy wife? That you are not so is the ground of all their olish attempts, and of their insolent hopes in Solmes's ıvour.—Oh, be mine!—I beseech you (thus on my knee I *seech* you) to be mine. We shall then have all the world ith us. And everybody will applaud an event that every- ody expects.

Was the devil in me! I no more intended all this ecstatic onsense, than I thought the same moment of flying in the r! All power is with this charming creature. It is I, ot she, at this rate, that must fail in the arduous trial.

Didst thou ever before hear of a man uttering solemn ings by an involuntary impulse, in defiance of premedita- on, and of all his proud schemes? But this sweet creature

is able to make a man forego every purpose of his heart that is not favourable to her. And I verily think I should be inclined to spare her all further trial (and yet what trial has she had?), were it not for the contention that her vigilance has set on foot, *which* shall overcome the *other*. Thou knowest my generosity to my uncontending Rosebud—and sometimes do I qualify my ardent aspirations after even this very fine creature, by this reflection:—That the most charming woman on earth, were she an empress, can excel the meanest in the customary visibles only. Such is the equality of the dispensation, to the prince and the peasant, in this prime gift WOMAN.

Well, but what was the result of this involuntary impulse on my part?—Wouldst thou not think I was taken at my offer?—An offer so solemnly made, and on one knee too?

No such thing! The pretty trifler let me off as easily as I could have wished.

Her brother's project; and to find that there were no hopes of a reconciliation for her; and the apprehension she had of the mischiefs that might ensue; these, not *my offer*, nor *love of me*, were the causes to which she ascribed all her sweet confusion—an *ascription* that is high treason against my sovereign pride,—to make marriage with *me* but a second-place refuge; and as good as to tell me that her confusion was owing to her concern that there were no hopes that my enemies would accept of her intended offer to renounce a man who had ventured his life for her, and was still ready to run the same risk in her behalf!

I re-urged her to make me happy, but I was to be postponed to her cousin Morden's arrival. On him are now placed all her hopes.

I raved; but to no purpose.

Another letter was to be sent, or had been sent, to her aunt Hervey, to which she hoped an answer.

Yet sometimes I think that fainter and fainter would have been her procrastinations, had I been a man of courage—*but so fearful was I of offending!*

A confounded thing! The man to be so bashful; the

oman to want so much courting!—How shall two such ›me together—no kind mediatress in the way?

But I must be contented. 'Tis seldom, however, that love *so ardent* as mine, meets with a spirit *so resigned* the *same person*. But true love, I am now convinced, ›ly wishes: nor has it any active will but that of the lored object.

But, oh, the charming creature, again of herself to men- on London! Had Singleton's plot been of *my own con- iving*, a more happy expedient could not have been ›ought of to induce her to resume her purpose of going ›ither; nor can I divine what could be her reason for ostponing it.

I enclose the letter from Joseph Leman, which I men- ›oned to thee in mine of Monday last,* with my answer to :. I cannot resist the vanity that urges me to the commu- ›ication. Otherwise, it were better, perhaps, that I suffer hee to imagine that this lady's stars fight against her, and ›spense the opportunities in my favour, which are only the onsequences of my own superlative invention.

—o—

LETTER LXII.

To Robert Lovelace, Esq., his Honner.

Saturday, April 15.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONNER,—This is to let your lonner kno', as how I have been emploied in a bisness I ould have been excused from, if so be I could, for it is to tt evidense from a young man, who has of late com'd out be my cuzzen by my grandmother's side; and but lately me to live in these partes, about a very vile thing, as unge master calls it, relating to your Honner. God rbid I should call it so without your leafe. It is not for plane a man as I be, to tacks my betters. It is consarn-

* See Letter LI. of this volume.

ing one Miss Batirton, of Notingam; a very pritty crature, belike.

Your Honner got her away, it seems, by a false letter to her, macking believe as how her she-cuzzen, that she derely loved, was coming to see her; and was tacken ill upon the rode: and so Miss Batirton set out in a shase, and one sarvant, to fet her cuzzen from the inne where she laid sick, as she thote: and the sarvant was tricked, and braute back the shase; but Miss Batirton was not harde of for a month, or so. And when it came to passe, that her frends founde her out and would have prossekutid your Honner, your Honner was gone abroad: and so she was broute to bed, as one may say, before your Honner's return: and she got colde in her lyin-inn, and lanquitched, and soon died: and the child is living; but your Honner never troubles your Honner's hedd about it in the least. And this, and some such other matters, of verry bad reporte, 'Squier Solmes was to tell my young lady of, if so be she would have harde him speke, before we lost her sweet company, as I may say, from heere.*

I hope your Honner will excuse me. But I was forsed to tell all I harde, because they had my cuzzen in to them, and he would have said he had tolde me: so could not be melely mouthed, for fere to be blone up, and plese your Honner.

Your Honner helped me to many ugly stories to tell against your Honner to my younge master, and younge mistriss; but did not tell me about this.

I most humbelly beseche your Honner to be good and kinde and fethful to my deerest younge lady, now you have her; or I shall brake my harte for having done some dedes that have helped to bringe things to this passe. Pray youre dere, good Honner, be just! Prayey do!—As God shall love ye! prayey do!—I cannot write no more for this pressent, for verry fear and grief—

But now I am cumm'd to my writing agen, will your Honner be pleased to tell me, if as how there be any danger to your Honner's life from this bisness; for my cuzzen is

* See vol. i. Letters LIX. and LX.

actlie hier'd to go down to Miss Batirton's frendes to see if they will stir in it: for you must kno' your Honner, as how he lived in the Batirton family at the time, and could be a good evidense, and all that.

I hope it was not so verry bad as Titus says it was; for he ses as how there was a rape in the case betwixt you *at 'urste*, and plese your Honner; and my cuzzen Titus is a very honist younge man as ever brocke bred. This is his caracktер; and this made me willinger to owne him for my relation, when we came to talck.

If there should be danger of your Honner's life, I hope your Honner will not be hanged like as one of us common men; only have your hedd cut off, or so: and yet it is pity such a hedd should be lossed: but if as how it shoulde be prossekutid to that furr, which God forbid, be plesed natheless to thinck of youre fethful Joseph Leman, before your hedd be condemned; for after condemnation, as I have been told, all will be the king's or the shreeve's.

I thote as how it was best to acquent your Honner of this; and for you to let me kno' if I could do any think to sarve your Honner, and prevent mischief with my cuzzen Titus, on his coming back from Nottingam, before he mackes his reporte.

I have gin him a hint already: for what, as I sed to him, cuzzen Titus, signifies stirring up the coles and macking of trife, to make rich gentilfolkes live at varience, and to be cutting of throtes, and such-like?

Verry trewe, sed little Titus. And this, and plese your Honner, gis me hopes of him, if so be your Honner gis me direction; sen', as God kno'es, I have a poor, a verry poor invenshon; only a willing mind to prevent mischief, that is the chief of my aim, and always was, I bless my God!—Als I could have made much mischief in my time; as indeed my sarvant may. Your Honner natheless praises my invenshon every now and then: Alas! and plese your Honner, what invenshon should such a plane man as I have?—But when your Honner sets me agoing by *your* fine invenshon, can do well enuff. And I am sure I have a hearty good will to deserve your Honner's faver, if I mought.

Two days, as I may say, off and on, have I been writin this long letter. And yet I have not sed all I would say For, be it knone unto your Honner, as how I do not like that Capten Singelton, which I told you of *in my two last letters.* He is always laying his hedd and my young master's hedd together; and I suspect much if so be some mischief is not going on between them: and still the more, as because my eldest younge lady semes to be joined to them sometimes.

Last week my younge master sed before my fase, *My harte's blood boiles over, Capten Singelton, for revenge upon this*—and he called your Honner by a name it is not for such a won as me to say what.—Capten Singelton whispred my younge master, being I was by. So young master sed, *You may say anything before Joseph; for, althoff he looks so seelie, he has as good a harte, and as good a hedd, as any sarvante in the world nede to have.* My conscience touched me just then. But why shoulde it? when all I do is to prevent mischeff; and seeing your Honner has so much patience, which younge master has not; so am not affeard of telling your Honner anything whatsomever.

And furthermore, I have suche a desire to desarve your Honner's bounty to me, as mackes me let nothing pass I can tell you of, to prevent harm: and too, besides, your Honner's goodness about the Blew Bore; which I have so good an accounte of!—I am sure I shall be bounden to bless your Honner the longest day I have to live.

And then the Blew Bore is not all neither: sen', and please your Honner, the pritty Sowe (God forgive me for gesting in so serus a matter) runs in my hedd likewise. I believe I shall love her mayhap more than your Honner would have me; for she begins to be kind and good-hu mered, and listens, and plese your Honner, licke as *if sh was among beans,* when I talke about the Blew Bore, an all that.

Prayey, your Honner, forgive the gesting of a poor plar man. We common fokes have our joys, and plese yo Honner, lick as our betters have; and if we be sometim

snubbed, we can find our underlings to snub them agen; and if not, we can get a wife mayhap, and snub her: so are masters somehow or other oursells.

But how I try your Honner's patience!—Sarvants will show their joyful hartes, tho' off but in partinens, when encouredg'd.

Be plesed from the prems's to let me kno' if as how I can be put upon any sarvice to sarve your Honner, and to sarve my deerest younge lady; which God grant! for I begin to be affearde for her, hearing what peple talck—to be sure your Honner will not do her no *harme*, as a man may say. But I kno' your Honner must be good to so wonderous a younge lady. How can you help it?—But heere my conscience smites me, that, *but for some of my stories, which your Honner taute me, my old master, and my old lady, and the two old 'squires, would not have been able to be half so hard-harted as they be, for all my younge master and younge mistress sayes.*

And here is the sad thing; they cannot come to clere up matters with my deerest young lady, because, as *your Honner has ordered it*, they have these stories as if bribed by me out of your Honner's sarvant; which must not be known for fere you should kill'n and me too, and blacken the briber!—Ah! your Honner! I doubte as that I am a very vild fellow (Lord bless my soul, I pray God!) and did not intend it.

But if my deerest younge lady should come to harm, and plese your Honner, the horsepond at the Blew Bore—but Lord preserve us all from all bad mischeff, and all bad ndes, I pray the Lord!—For tho'ff your Honner is kinde to ie in worldly pelff, yet *what shall a man get to loos his soul*, s holy Skrittuer says, and plese your Honner?

But natheless I am in hope of reppentence hereafter, eing but a younge man, if I do wrong thro' ignorens: your lonner being a grate man, and a grate wit; and I a poor ature, not worthy notice; and your Honner able to nswer for all. But, howsomever, I am

Your Honner's fethful sarvant in all dewtie,

JOSEPH LEMAN.

April 15 *and* 16.

LETTER LXIII.

Mr. Lovelace to Joseph Leman.

Monday, April 17.

HONEST JOSEPH,—You have a worse opinion of your invention than you ought to have. I must praise it again. Of a plain man's head, I have not known many better than yours. How often have your forecast and discretion answered my wishes in cases which I could not foresee, not knowing how my general directions would succeed, or what might happen in the execution of them! You are too doubtful of your own abilities, honest Joseph; that's your fault.—But it being a fault that is owing to natural *modesty*, you ought rather to be *pitied* for it than *blamed*.

The affair of Miss Betterton was a youthful frolic. I love dearly to exercise my invention. I do assure you, Joseph, that I have ever had more pleasure in my contrivances, than in the end of them. I am no sensual man: but a man of spirit—one woman is like another—*you understand me, Joseph.*—In coursing, all the sport is made by the winding hare—a barn-door chick is better eating—*now you take me, Joseph.*

Miss Betterton was but a tradesman's daughter. The family, indeed, were grown rich, and aimed at a new line of gentry; and were unreasonable enough to expect a man of my family would marry her. I was honest. I gave the young lady no hope of that; for she put it to me. She resented—kept up, and was kept up. A little innocent contrivance was necessary to get her out. But no rape in the case, I assure you, Joseph. She loved me—I loved her. Indeed, when I got her to the inn, I asked her no question. It is cruel to ask a modest woman for her consent. It is creating difficulties to both. Had not her friends been officious, I had been constant and faithful to her to this day, as far as I know—for then I had not known my angel.

I went not abroad upon *her* account. She loved me too

well to have appeared against me; she refused to sign a paper they had drawn up for her, to found a prosecution upon; and the brutal creatures would not permit the mid-wife's assistance, till her life was in danger; and, I believe, o this her death was owing.

I went into mourning for her, though abroad at the time. l distinction I have ever paid to those worthy creatures who died in childbed by me.

I was ever nice in my loves.—These were the rules I laid own to myself on my entrance into active life:—To set he mother above want, if her friends were cruel, and if I ould not get her a husband worthy of her: to shun common omen—a piece of justice I owed to innocent ladies, as well s to myself: to marry off a former mistress, if possible, efore I took to a new one: to maintain a lady handsomely n her lying-in: to provide for the little one, if it lived, ccording to the degree of its mother: to go into mourning or the mother, if she died. And the promise of this was a reat comfort to the pretty dears, as they grew near their imes.

All my errors, all my expenses, have been with and upon omen. So I could acquit my conscience (acting thus onourably by them) as well as my discretion as to point of rtune.

All men love women—and find me a man of more honour, these points, if you can, Joseph.

No wonder the sex love me as they do!

But *now* I am strictly virtuous. I am reformed. So I ve been for a long time, resolving to marry as soon as I n prevail upon the most admirable of women to have me. hink of nobody else—it is impossible I should. I have ared very pretty girls for her sake. Very true, Joseph! set your honest heart at rest—you see the pains I take to isfy your qualms.

But, as to Miss Betterton—no rape in the case, I repeat: pes are unnatural things, and more *are* than are imagined, seph. I should be loth to be put to such a streight; I ver was. Miss Betterton was taken from me against her

own will. In that case her friends, not I, committed the rape.

I have contrived to see the boy twice, unknown to the aunt who takes care of him; loves him; and would not now part with him on any consideration. The boy is a fine boy, I thank God. No father need be ashamed of him. He will be well provided for. If not, I would take care of him. He will have his mother's fortune. They curse the father, ungrateful wretches! but bless the boy.—Upon the whole, there is nothing vile in this matter on my side—a great deal on the Bettertons.

Wherefore, Joseph, be not thou in pain, either for *my* head, or for *thy* own neck; nor for the Blue Boar; nor for the pretty Sow.

I love your jesting. Jesting better becomes a poor man than qualms. I love to have you jest. All we say, all we do, all we wish for, is a jest. He that makes life itself not so is a sad fellow, and has the worst of it.

I doubt not, Joseph, but you have had your joys, as you say, as well as your betters. May you have more and more, honest Joseph!—He that grudges a poor man joy, ought to have none himself. Jest on, therefore.—Jesting, I repeat, better becomes thee than qualms.

I had no *need* to tell you of Miss Betterton. Did I not furnish you with stories enough, without hers, against myself, to augment your credit with your cunning masters? Besides, I was loth to mention Miss Betterton, her friends being all living, and in credit. I loved her too—for she was taken from me by her cruel friends, while our joys were young.

But enough of dear Miss Betterton.—*Dear*, I say; for death *endears*.—Rest to her worthy soul!—There, Joseph, off went a deep sigh to the memory of Miss Betterton!

As to the journey of little Titus (I now recollect the fellow by his name) let that take its course: a lady dying in child-bed eighteen months ago; no process begun in her life-time; refusing herself to give evidence against me while she lived—pretty circumstances to found an indictment for a rape upon!

As to your young lady, the ever admirable Miss Clarissa rlowe, I always courted her for a wife. Others rather ex- ted marriage from the vanity of their own hearts, than m my promises; for I was always careful of what I pro- ed. You know, Joseph, that I have gone beyond my mises to *you.* I do to everybody; and why? because it he best way of showing that I have no grudging or narrow it. A promise is an obligation. *A just man will keep his mise, a generous man will go beyond it.*—This is my rule. f you doubt my honour to your young lady, it is more n she does. She would not stay with me an hour if she . Mine is the steadiest heart in the world. Hast thou reason to think it so? Why this squeamishness then, iest Joseph?

But it is because thou *art* honest—so I forgive thee. ioever loves my divine Clarissa, loves me.

Let James Harlowe call me what names he will, for his er's sake I will bear them. Do not be concerned for me; favour will make me rich amends; his own vilely mali- is heart will make his blood *boil over* at any time; and n it does, thinkest thou that I will let it touch my con- nce?—and if not *mine,* why should it touch *thine?* Ah! eph, Joseph! what a foolish teaser is thy conscience! h a conscience as gives a plain man trouble, when he nds to do for the best, is weakness, not conscience.

ut say what thou wilt, write all thou knowest or hearest o me, I'll have patience with everybody. Why should I when it is as much the desire of my heart, as it is of e, to prevent mischief?

o now, Joseph, having taken all this pains to satisfy thy science, and answer all thy doubts, and to banish all thy s, let me come to a *new point.*

Your endeavours and mine, which were designed, *by idabout ways,* to reconcile all, even against the wills of most obstinate, have not, we see, answered the end we ed they would answer; but, on the contrary, have ened the unhappy differences between our families. But has not been either your fault or mine: it is owing to

the black, pitch-like blood of your venomous-hearted young master, *boiling over*, as he owns, that our honest wishes have hitherto been frustrated.

Yet we must proceed in the same course. We shall tire them out in time, and they will propose terms; and when they do, they shall find how reasonable mine shall be, little as they deserve from me.

Persevere, therefore, Joseph, honest Joseph, persevere; and, unlikely as you may imagine the means, our desires will be at last obtained.

We have nothing for it now, but to go through with our work in the way we have begun. For since (as I told you in my last) my beloved mistrusts you, she will blow you up, if she be *not* mine; if she *be*, I can, and will, protect you; and as, if there will be any fault, in her opinion, it will be rather mine than yours, she *must* forgive you, and keep her husband's secrets, for the sake of his reputation; else she will be guilty of a great failure in her duty. So now you have set your hand to the plough, Joseph, there is no looking back.

And what is the consequence of all this: one labour more, and that will be all that will fall to your lot; at least, of consequence.

My beloved is resolved not to think of marriage till she has tried to move her friends to a reconciliation with her. You know they are determined not to be reconciled. She has it in her head, I doubt not, to make me submit to the people I hate; and if I did, they would rather insult me, than receive my condescension as they ought. She even owns, that she will renounce me, if they insist upon it, provided they will give up Solmes: so, to all appearance, I am still as far as ever from the happiness of calling her mine. Indeed I am more likely than ever to lose her (if I cannot contrive some way to avail myself of the present critical situation); and then, Joseph, all I have been studying, and all you have been doing, will signify nothing.

At the place where we are, we cannot long be private. The lodgings are inconvenient for us, while both together,

ınd while she refuses to marry. She wants to get me at a listance from her; there are extraordinary convenient lodgngs, in my eye, in London, where we could be private, and ll mischief avoided. When *there* (if I *get* her thither), she ′ill insist that I shall leave her. Miss Howe is for ever utting her upon contrivances. That, you know, is the ɛason I have been obliged, by your means, to play the ımily off at Harlowe Place upon Mrs. Howe, and Mrs. lowe upon her daughter.—Ah, Joseph! Little need for your ɛars for my angel! *I* only am in danger: but were I the ɛe-liver I am reported to be, all this could I get over with wet finger, as the saying is.

But, by the help of one of your hints, I have thought of ɑ expedient which will do everything, and raise your reutation, though already so high, higher still. This Singleɔn, I hear, is a fellow who loves enterprising: the view he ıs to get James Harlowe to be his principal owner in a rge vessel which he wants to be put into the command of, ay be the subject of their present close conversation. But ıce he is taught to have so good an opinion of you, Joseph, nnot you (still pretending an abhorrence of me, and of y contrivances) propose to Singleton to propose to James arlowe (who so much thirsts for revenge upon me) to assist m, with his whole ship's crew, upon occasion, to carry off ı sister to Leith, where both have houses, or elsewhere?

You may tell them, that if this can be effected, it will ıke me raving mad; and bring your young lady into all ɛir measures.

You can inform them, *as from my servant*, of the distance ɛ keeps me at, in hopes of procuring her father's forgivess, by cruelly giving me up, if insisted upon.

You can tell them, that as the only secret my servant has pt from you is the place we are in, you make no doubt at a two-guinea bribe will bring that out, and also an in-ɛmation when I shall be at a distance from her, that the terprise may be conducted with safety.

You may tell them (still as from my servant), that we ɛ about removing from inconvenient lodgings to others

more convenient (which is true), and that I must be often absent from her.

If they listen to your proposal, you will promote your interest with Betty, by telling it to her as a secret. Betty will tell Arabella of it; Arabella will be overjoyed at anything that will help forward her revenge upon me; and will reveal it (if her brother do not) to her uncle Antony; he probably will whisper it to Mrs. Howe; she can keep nothing from her daughter, though they are always jangling. Her daughter will acquaint my beloved with it. And if it will not, or if it will, come to my ears from some of those, you can write it to me, as in confidence, by way of preventing mischief; which is the study of us both.

I can then show it to my beloved; then will she be for placing a greater confidence in me—that will convince me of her love, which now I am sometimes ready to doubt. She will be for hastening to the safer lodgings. I shall have a pretence to stay about her person, as a guard. She will be convinced that there is no expectation to be had of a reconciliation. You can give James Harlowe and Singleton continual false scents, as I shall direct you; so that no mischief can possibly happen.

And what will be the happy, happy, thrice happy consequences?—The lady will be mine in an honourable way, we shall all be friends in good time. The two guineas will be an agreeable addition *to the many gratuities I have helped you to, by the like contrivances, from this stingy family.* Your reputation, both for head and heart, as I hinted before, will be heightened. The Blue Boar will also be yours; nor shall you have the least difficulty about raising money to buy the stock, if it be worth your while to have it.

Betty will likewise then be yours. You have both saved money, it seems. The whole Harlowe family, whom you have so faithfully served ['tis serving them, surely, to prevent the mischief which their violent son would have brought upon them], will throw you in somewhat towards housekeeping. I will still add to your store—so nothing but happiness before you!

Crow, Joseph, crow!—a dunghill of thy own in view; rvants to snub at thy pleasure; a wife to quarrel with, or love, as thy humour leads thee; *Landlord* and *Landlady* every word; to be paid, instead of paying, for thy eating id drinking. But not thus happy only in thyself: happy promoting peace and reconciliation between two good milies, in the long run, without hurting any Christian ul. O Joseph, honest Joseph! what envy wilt thou ise, and who would be squeamish with such prospects fore him.

This one labour, I repeat, crowns the work. If you can t but such a design entertained by them, whether they osecute it or not, it will be equally to the purpose of

Your loving friend,

R. LOVELACE.

—o—

LETTER LXIV.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Mrs. Hervey.

[Enclosed in her last to Miss Howe.]

Thursday, April 20.

HONOURED MADAM,—Having not had the favour of an swer to a letter I took the liberty to write to you on the th, I am in some hopes that it may have miscarried: for had much rather it should, than to have the mortifica- n to think that my aunt Hervey deemed me unworthy of honour of her notice.

In this hope, having kept a copy of it, and not become le to express myself in terms better suited to the unhappy cumstances of things, I transcribe and enclose what I n wrote.* And I humbly beseech you to favour the ntents of it with your interest.

Hitherto it is in my power to perform what I undertake

* The contents of the Letter referred to are given in Letter XXXIX. of volume.

for in this letter: and it would be very grievous to me to be precipitated upon measures, which may render the desirable reconciliation more difficult.

If, Madam, I were permitted to write to you with the hopes of being answered, I could clear my intention with regard to the step I have taken, although I could not perhaps acquit myself to some of my severest judges, of an imprudence previous to it. You, I am sure, would pity me, if you knew all I could say, and how miserable I am in the forfeiture of the good opinion of all my friends.

I flatter myself, that *their* favour is yet retrievable: but they, whatever be the determination at Harlowe Place, do not *you*, my dearest aunt, deny me the favour of a few lines to inform me if there can be any hope of a reconciliation upon terms less shocking than those heretofore endeavoured to be imposed upon me; or if (which God forbid!) I am to be for ever reprobated.

At least, my dear aunt, procure for me the justice of my wearing apparel, and the little money and other things which I wrote to my sister for, and mention in the enclosed to you; that I may not be destitute of common conveniences, or be under a necessity to owe an obligation for such, where, at present, however, I would least of all owe it.

Allow me to say, that had I *designed* what happened, I might (as to the money and jewels at least) have saved myself some of the mortification which I have suffered, and which I still further apprehend, if my request be not complied with.

If you are permitted to encourage an *eclaircissement* of what I hint, I will open my whole heart to you, and inform you of everything.

It it be any pleasure to have me mortified, be pleased to let it be known that I am extremely mortified. And yet it is *entirely* from my own reflections that I am so, having nothing to find fault with in the behaviour of the person from whom every evil was to be apprehended.

The bearer, having business your way, will bring me your answer on Saturday morning, if you favour me according

my hopes. I knew not that I should have this opportunity till I had written the above.

I am, my dearest aunt,

Your ever dutiful,

CL. HARLOWE.

pleased to direct for me, if I am to be favoured with a few lines, to be left at Mr. Osgood's, near Soho Square; and nobody shall ever know of your goodness to me, if you desire it to be kept a secret.

—o—

LETTER LXV.

Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

Saturday, April 22.

I CANNOT for my life account for your wretch's teasing ays; but he certainly doubts your love of him. In this is a *modest* man, as well as *somebody* else; and tacitly nfesses that he does not deserve it.

Your Israelitish hankerings after the Egyptian onion stified still more in your letter to your aunt), your often peated regrets for meeting him, for being betrayed away him—these he cannot bear.

I have been looking back on the whole of his conduct, d comparing it with his general character; and find that is more *consistently,* more *uniformly,* mean, revengeful, d proud, than either of us once imagined.

From his cradle, as I may say, as an *only child,* and a y, humorsome, spoiled, mischievous; the governor of his vernors.

A libertine in his riper years, hardly regardful of appearces; and despising the sex in general, for the faults of rticulars of it, who made themselves too cheap to him.

What has been his behaviour in your family?—A CLARISSA view (from the time your foolish brother was obliged to

take a life from him), but defiance for defiances. Getting you into his power by terror, by artifice. What politeness can be expected from such a man?

Well, but what in such a situation is to be done? Why, you must despise him: you must hate him, if you can, and run away from him.—But whither?—Whither indeed, now that your brother is laying foolish plots to put you in a still worse condition, as it may happen.

But if you cannot despise and hate him—if you care not to break with him, you must part with some punctilios. And if the so doing bring not on the solemnity, you must put yourself into the protection of the ladies of his family.

Their respect for you is of itself a security for his honour to you, if there could be any room for doubt. And at least you should remind him of his offer to bring one of the Miss Montagues to attend you at your new lodgings in town, and accompany you till all is happily over.

This, you'll say, will be as good as *declaring* yourself to be his. *And so let it.* You ought not now to think of any thing else but to be *his*. Does not your brother's project convince you more and more of this?

Give over then, my dearest friend, any thoughts of this hopeless reconciliation, *which has kept you balancing thus long*. You own, in the letter before me, that he made very explicit offers, though you give me not the very words. And he gave his reasons, I perceive, with his wishes that you should accept them; which very few of the sorry fellows do, whose plea is generally but a compliment to our self-love —*That we must love them*, however presumptuous and unworthy, *because they love us*.

Were I in *your place*, and had *your* charming delicacies, I should, perhaps, do as you do. No doubt but I should expect that the man should urge me with respectful warmth; that he should supplicate with constancy, and that all his words and actions should tend to the one principal point; nevertheless, if I suspected art or delay, founded upon his doubts of my love, I would either condescend to clear up his doubts or renounce him for ever.

And in this last case, I, your Anna Howe, would exert myself, and either find you a private refuge, or resolve to share fortunes with you.

What a wretch! to be so easily answered by your refer-nce to the arrival of your cousin Morden! But I am fraid that you was too scrupulous; for did he not resent hat reference?

Could we have *his* account of the matter, I fancy, my ear, I should think you over nice, over delicate.* Had ou laid hold of his *acknowledged* explicitness, he would ave been as much in *your* power, as now you seem to be *his;* you wanted not to be told, that the person who had een tricked into such a step as you had taken, must of ecessity submit to many mortifications.

But were it to me, a girl of spirit as I am thought to be, do assure you, I would, in a quarter of an hour (all the me I would allow to punctilio in such a case as yours) now what he drives at: since either he must mean *well* r *ill;* if *ill* the sooner you know it the better. If *well,* hose modesty is it he distresses, but that of his own wife?

And methinks you should endeavour to avoid all exas-erating recriminations, as to what you have heard of his ailure in morals; especially while you are so happy as not o have occasion to speak of them by experience.

I grant that it gives a worthy mind some satisfaction in aving borne its testimony against the immoralities of a bad ne. But that correction, which is unseasonably given, is ore likely either to harden or make a hypocrite, than to eclaim.

I am pleased however, as well as you, with his making ght of your brother's *wise* project.—Poor creature! and ust Master Jemmy Harlowe, with his half wit, pretend o plot and contrive mischief, yet rail at Lovelace for the ame things?—A witty villain deserves hanging at once

* The reader who has seen his account, which Miss Howe could not have een when she wrote thus, will observe that it was not possible for a person f her true delicacy of mind to act otherwise than she did, to a man so cruelly nd so insolently artful.

(and without ceremony, if you please): but a half-witted one deserves broken bones first, and hanging afterwards. I think Lovelace has given his character in few words.*

Be angry at me if you please; but as sure as you are alive, now that this poor creature, whom some call your brother, finds he has succeeded in making you fly your father's house, and that he has nothing to fear but your getting into your *own*, and into an independence of him, he thinks himself equal to anything, and so he has a mind to fight Lovelace with his own weapons.

Don't you remember his pragmatical triumph, as told you by your aunt, and prided in by that saucy Betty Barnes, from his own foolish mouth? †

I expect nothing from your letter to your aunt. I hope Lovelace will never know the contents of it. In every one of yours, I see that he as warmly resents as he dares the little confidence you have in him. I should resent it too, were I he; and knew I deserved better.

Don't be scrupulous about clothes, if you think of putting yourself into the protection of the ladies of his family. They know how matters stand between you and your relations, and love you never the worse for the silly people's cruelty.

I know you won't demand possession of your estate. But give *him* a right to demand it for you; and that will be still better.

Adieu, my dear! May Heaven guide and direct you in all your steps, is the daily prayer of

Your ever affectionate and faithful

ANNA HOWE.

* See Letter LX. of this volume. † See Letter XIV. of this volume.

LETTER LXVI.

Mr. Belford to Robert Lovelace, Esq.

Friday, April 21.

THOU, Lovelace, hast been long the *entertainer;* I the *entertained.* Nor have I been solicitous to animadvert, as thou wentest along, upon thy inventions, and their tendency. For I believed, that with all thy airs, the unequalled perfections and fine qualities of this lady would always be her protection and security. But now that I find thou hast so far succeeded as to induce her to come to town, and to choose her lodgings in a house, the people of which will too probably damp and suppress any honourable motions which may arise in thy mind in her favour, I cannot help writing, and that professedly in her behalf.

My inducements to this are not owing to virtue. But if they *were,* what hope could I have of affecting thee by pleas arising from it?

Nor would such a man as thou art be deterred, were I to remind thee of the vengeance which thou mayest one day expect, if thou insultest a woman of her character, family, and fortune.

Neither are gratitude and honour motives to be mentioned in a woman's favour, to men such as we are, who consider all those of the sex as fair prize, over whom we can obtain a power. For *our honour,* and *honour,* in the *general acceptation* of the word, are two things.

What then is my motive?—What, but the true friendship that I bear thee, Lovelace; which makes me plead *thy own sake,* and *thy family's sake,* in the justice thou owest to this incomparable creature; who, however, so well deserves to have *her sake* to be mentioned as the principal consideration.

Last time I was at M. Hall, thy noble uncle so earnestly pressed me to use my interest to persuade thee to enter the pale, and gave me so many family reasons for it, that I could not help engaging myself heartily on his side of the ques-

tion: and the rather, as I knew that thy own intentions with regard to this fine woman were then worthy of *her*. And of this I assured his Lordship; who was half afraid of thee, because of the ill usage thou receivedst from her family. But now that the case is altered, let me press the matter home to thee from other considerations.

By what I have heard of this lady's perfections from every mouth, as well as from thine, and from every letter thou hast written, where wilt thou find such another woman? And why shouldst thou tempt her virtue? Why shouldst thou wish to try where there is no reason to doubt?

Were I in thy case, and designed to marry, and if I preferred a woman as I know thou dost this to all the women in the world, I should dread to make further trial, knowing what *we* know of the sex, for *fear* of succeeding; and especially if I doubted not, that if there were a woman in the world virtuous at heart, it is she.

And let me tell thee, Lovelace, that in this lady's situation, the trial is not a fair trial. Considering the depth of thy plots and contrivances: considering the opportunities which I see thou must have with her, in spite of her own heart; all her relations' follies acting in concert though unknown to themselves, with thy wicked, scheming head: considering how destitute of protection she is: considering the house she is to be in, where she will be surrounded with thy implements; *specious, well-bred,* and *genteel* creatures not easily to be detected when they are disposed to preserve appearances, especially by the young inexperienced lady wholly unacquainted with the town: considering all these things, I say, what glory, what cause of triumph wilt thou have, if she should be overcome?—Thou, too, a man born for intrigue, full of invention, intrepid, remorseless, able patiently to watch for thy opportunity, not hurried, as most men, by gusts of violent passion, which often nip a project in the bud, and make the snail that was just putting out his horns to meet the inviter, withdraw into its shell—a man who has no regard to his word or oath to the sex; the lady scrupulously strict to *her* word, incapable of art or design;

apt therefore to believe well of others—it would be a miracle if she stood such an attempter, such attempts, and such snares as I see will be laid for her. And, after all, I see not when men are so frail *without* importunity, that so much should be expected from women, daughters of the same fathers and mothers, and made up of the same brittle compounds (education all the difference), nor where the triumph is in subduing them.

May there not be other Lovelaces, thou askedst, who, attracted by her beauty, may endeavour to prevail with her?*

No; there cannot, I answer, be such another man, person, mind, fortune, and thy character, as above given, taken in. If thou imaginest there could, such is thy pride, that thou wouldst think the worst of thyself.

But let me touch upon thy predominant passion, *revenge*; for *love* is but second to that, as I have often told thee, though it has set thee into raving at me: what poor pretences for revenge are the difficulties thou hadst in getting her off; allowing that she had run a risk of being Solmes's wife, had she stayed? If these are other than pretences, why thankest thou not those who, by their persecutions of her, answered thy hopes, and threw her into thy power?—Besides, are not the pretences thou makest for further trial, most ungratefully, as well as *contradictorily* founded upon the supposition of error in her, occasioned by her *favour* to thee?

And let me, for the utter confusion of thy poor pleas of this nature, ask thee—Would she, in thy opinion, had she *willingly gone off with thee*, have been entitled to *better* quarter?—For a mistress indeed she might: but wouldest thou for a *wife* have had cause to like her half so well as now?

Has she not demonstrated, that even the highest provocations were not sufficient to warp her from her duty to her parents, though a native, and, as I may say, an originally *involuntary* duty, because *native?* And is not this a charm-

* See Letter XXXIII. of this volume.

ing earnest that she will sacredly observe a still higher duty into which she proposes to enter, when she does enter, by *plighted* vows, and entirely as a *volunteer?*

That she loves thee, wicked as thou art, and cruel as a panther, there is no reason to doubt. Yet, what a command has she over herself, that such a penetrating self-flatterer as thyself is sometimes ready to doubt it! Though persecuted on the one hand, as she was, by her own family, and attracted, on the other, by the splendour of thine; every one of whom courts her to rank herself among them?

Thou wilt perhaps think that I have departed from my proposition, and pleaded the *lady's sake* more than *thine,* in the above—but no such thing. All that I have written is more in *thy* behalf than in *hers;* since she may make *thee* happy; but it is next to impossible, I should think, if she preserve her delicacy, that thou canst make *her* so. What is the love of a rakish heart? There cannot be *peculiarity* in it. But I need not give my further reasons. Thou wilt have ingenuousness enough, I daresay, were there occasion for it, to subscribe to my opinion.

I plead not for the state from any great liking to it myself. Nor have I, at present, thoughts of entering into it. But, as thou art the last of thy name; as thy family is of note and figure in thy country; and as thou thyself thinkest that thou shalt one day marry: Is it possible, let me ask thee, that thou canst have such another opportunity as thou now hast, if thou lettest this slip? A woman, in her family and fortune not unworthy of thine own (though thou art so apt, from pride of ancestry, and pride of heart, to speak slightly of the families thou dislikest); so celebrated for beauty; and so noted at the same time for prudence, for *soul* (I will say, instead of *sense*), and for virtue?

If thou art not so narrow-minded an elf, as to prefer thine own *single* satisfaction to *posterity,* thou, who shouldst wish to beget children for duration, wilt not postpone till the rake's usual time; that is to say, till diseases or years, or both, lay hold of thee; since in that case thou wouldst entitle thyself to the curses of thy legitimate progeny for

ving them a being altogether miserable; a being which ey will be obliged to hold upon a worse tenure than that *ant-courtesy*, which thou callest the *worst*;* to wit, upon e *Doctor's courtesy*; thy descendants also propagating (if ey shall live, and be able to propagate) a wretched race, at shall entail the curse, or the *reason* for it, upon remote nerations.

Wicked as the sober world accounts you and me, we have t yet, it is to be hoped, got over all compunction. Although find religion against us, we have not yet presumed to ake a religion to suit our practices. We despise those o do. And we know better than to be even *doubters*. short, we believe a future state of rewards and punishents. But as we have so much youth and health in hand, hope to have time for repentance. That is to say, in ain English [nor think thou me too grave, Lovelace: *ou* art grave sometimes, though not often], we hope to live sense, as long as sense can relish, and purpose to reform en we can sin no longer.

And shall this admirable woman suffer for her generous deavours to set on foot thy reformation; and for insisting on proofs of the sincerity of thy professions before she ll be thine?

Upon the whole matter, let me wish thee to consider well at thou art about, before thou goest a step farther in the th which thou hast chalked out for thyself to tread, and just going to enter upon. Hitherto all is so far right, at if the lady *mistrusts* thy honour, she has no *proofs*. Be nest to her, then, in *her* sense of the word None of thy mpanions, thou knowest, will offer to laugh at what *thou* st. And if they *should* (on thy entering into a state ich has been so much ridiculed by thee, and by all of us) ou hast one advantage—it is this, that thou canst not be hamed.

Deferring to the post-day to close my letter, I find one t at my cousin Osgood's, with direction to be forwarded the lady. It was brought within these two hours by a

* See Letter XLI. of this volume.

particular hand, and has a Harlowe seal upon it. As it may therefore be of importance, I despatch it with my own, by my servant, post-haste.*

I suppose you will soon be in town. Without the lady, I hope. Farewell.

Be honest, and be happy,

J. BELFORD.

Saturday, April 22.

—o—

LETTER LXVII.

Mrs. Hervey to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

[In answer to Letter XXXIII.]

DEAR NIECE,—It would be hard not to write a few lines, so much pressed to write, to one I ever loved. Your former letter I received; yet was not at liberty to answer it. I break my word to answer you now.

Strange informations are every day received about you. The wretch you are with, we are told, is every hour triumphing and defying — must not these informations aggravate? You know the uncontrollableness of the man. He loves his own humour better than he loves you—though so fine a creature as you are! I warned you over and over: no young lady was ever more warned!—Miss Clarissa Harlowe to do such a thing!

You might have given your friends the meeting. If you had *held* your aversion, it would have been complied with. As soon as I was intrusted myself with their *intention* to give up the point, I gave you a hint—a dark one perhaps† —but who would have thought—O Miss!—such an *artful* flight!—Such *cunning* preparations!

But you want to clear up things—*what* can you clear up? Are you not gone off?—With a Lovelace too? *What*, my dear, would you clear up?

* This Letter was from Miss Arabella Harlowe. See Letter LXX.

† Letter XIV. of this volume.

You did not *design* to go, you say. Why did you meet
m then, chariot and six horsemen, all prepared by him?
h, my dear, how art produces art!—Will it be believed?—
it *would,* what power will he be thought to have had
er you!—He—Who?— *Lovelace!*—The vilest of liber-
ies!—Over whom? A *Clarissa!*—Was your love for
ch a man above your reason? Above your resolution?
hat credit would a belief of this, *if* believed, bring you?
How mend the matter?—Oh! that you had stood the
xt meeting.

I'll tell you all that was intended if you had.

It was, indeed, imagined that you would not have been
le to resist your father's entreaties and commands. He
is resolved to be all condescension, if anew you had not
ovoked him. *I love my Clary Harlowe,* said he, but an
ur before the killing tidings were brought him; *I love*
r *as my life: I will kneel to her, if nothing else will do,*
prevail upon her to oblige me.

Your father and mother (the reverse of what should have
en!) would have humbled themselves to *you:* and if you
ld have denied them, and refused to sign the settlements
vious to the meeting, they would have yielded, although
h regret.

But it was presumed, so naturally sweet your temper, so
-denying as they thought you, that you could *not* have
hstood them, notwithstanding all your dislike of the *one*
n, without a greater degree of headstrong passion for the
er, than you had given any of us reason to expect from you.
If you *had,* the meeting on Wednesday would have been
ighter trial to you. You would have been presented to
your assembled friends, with a short speech only, 'That
is was the young creature, till very lately faultless, con-
escending, and obliging; now having cause to glory in a
iumph over the wills of father, mother, uncles, the most
ndulgent; over family interests, family views; and pre-
rring her own will to everybody's! and this for a transi-
ory preference to *person* only; there being no comparison
etween the men as to their morals.'

Thus complied with, and perhaps blessed, by your fathe and mother, and the consequences of your disobedienc deprecated in the solemnest manner by your inimitabl mother, your *generosity* would have been appealed to, sinc your duty would have been found too weak an inducement and you would have been bid to withdraw for one half hour' consideration. Then would the settlements have been agai tendered for your signing, by the person least disobligin to you; by your good Norton perhaps; she perhap seconded by your father again; and, if again refused, yo would again have been led in to declare such your refusa Some restrictions which you yourself had proposed, woul have been insisted upon. You would have been permitte to go home with me, or with your uncle Antony (wit *which* of us was not agreed upon, because they hoped yo might be persuaded), there to stay till the arrival of you cousin Morden; or till your father could have borne to se you; or till assured that the views of Lovelace were at a end.

This the intention, your father so set upon your compli ance, so much in hopes that you would have yielded, tha you would have been prevailed upon by methods so con descending and so gentle; no wonder that *he*, in particula was like a distracted man, when he heard of your flight—c your flight so *premeditated*—with your ivy summer-hous dinings, your arts to blind me, and all of us!—Naughty naughty young creature!

I, for my part, would not believe it when told of i Your uncle Hervey would not believe it. We rathe expected, we rather feared, a still more desperate adventur There could be but one more desperate; and I was readie to have the cascade resorted to, than the garden back-doo —Your mother fainted away, while her heart was tor between the two apprehensions.—Your father, poor man your father was beside himself for near an hour—Wha imprecations!—What dreadful imprecations!—To this da he can hardly bear your name: yet can think of nobod else. Your merits, my dear, but aggravate your fault.–

Something of fresh aggravation every hour. How can any favour be expected?

I am sorry for it; but am afraid nothing you ask will be complied with.

Why mention you, my dear, the saving you from mortifications, who have gone off with a man? What a poor pride is it to stand upon anything else!

I dare not open my lips in your favour. Nobody dare. Your letter must stand by itself. This has caused me to send it to Harlowe Place. Expect therefore great severity. May you be enabled to support the lot you have drawn! Oh, my dear! how unhappy have you made everybody! Can *you* expect to be happy? Your father wishes you had never been born. Your poor mother—but why should I afflict you? There is now no help!—You must be changed, indeed, if you are not very unhappy yourself in the reflections your thoughtful mind must suggest to you.

You must now make the best of your lot. Yet *not* married, it seems!

It is in your power, you say, to perform whatever you shall undertake to do. You may deceive yourself: you hope that your reputation and the favour of your friends may be retrieved. Never, never, both, I doubt, if either. Every offended person (and that is all who loved you, and are related to you) must *join* to restore you: when can these be of *one* mind in a case so notoriously wrong?

It would be very grievous, you say, to be precipitated upon measures that may make the desirable reconciliation more difficult. Is it *now*, my dear, a time for you to be afraid of being *precipitated?* At *present*, if *ever*, there can be no thought of reconciliation. The *upshot* of your precipitation must first be seen. There may be murder yet, as far as we know. Will the man you are with part willingly with you? If *not*, what may be the consequence? If he *will*—Lord bless me! what shall we think of his reasons for it?—I will fly this thought. I know your purity—but, my dear, are you not out of all protection?—Are you not unmarried?—Have you not (making your daily prayers useless) thrown yourself

into temptation? And is not the man the most wicked of plotters?

You have hitherto, you say (and I think, my dear, with an air unbecoming your declared penitence), *no fault to find with the behaviour of a man from whom every evil was apprehended:* like Cæsar to the Roman augur, which I heard you tell of, who had bid him *beware of the Ides of March: the Ides of March,* said Cæsar, seeing the augur among the crowd, as he marched in state to the senate-house, from which he never was to return alive, *the Ides of March are come. But they are not past,* the augur replied. Make the application, my dear: may you be able to make this reflection upon his good behaviour to the last of your knowledge of him! May he behave himself better to you, than he ever did to anybody else over whom he had power! Amen!

No answer, I beseech you. I hope your messenger will not tell anybody that I have written to you. And I daresay you will not show what I have written to Mr. Lovelace—for I have written with the less reserve, depending upon your prudence.

You have my prayers.

My Dolly knows not that I write: nobody does;* not even Mr. Hervey.

Dolly would have several times written: but having defended your fault with heat, and with a partiality that alarmed us (such a fall as yours, my dear, must be alarming to all parents), she has been forbidden, on pain of losing our favour for ever: and this at your family's request, as well as by her father's commands.

You have the poor girl's hourly prayers, I will, however, tell you, though she knows not what I do, as well as those of

Your truly afflicted aunt,

D. HERVEY.

Friday, April 21.

* Notwithstanding what Mrs. Hervey here says, it will be hereafter seen that this severe letter was written in private concert with the implacable Arabella.

LETTER LXVIII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

[With the preceding.]

Saturday Morning, April 22.

I HAVE just now received the enclosed from my aunt Hervey. Be pleased, my dear, to keep her secret of having written to the unhappy wretch her niece.

I may go to London, I see, or where I will. No matter what becomes of me.

I was the willinger to suspend my journey thither till I heard from Harlowe Place. I thought if I could be encouraged to hope for a reconciliation, I would let this man see, that he should not have me in his power, but upon my own terms, if at all.

But I find I must be *his*, whether I will or not; and perhaps through still greater mortifications than those great ones which I have already met with—And must I be so absolutely thrown upon a man, with whom I am not at all satisfied!

My letter is sent, you see, to Harlowe Place. My heart aches for the reception it may meet with there.

One comfort only arises to me from its being sent; that my aunt will clear *herself*, by the communication, from the supposition of having corresponded with the poor creature whom they have all determined to reprobate. It is no small part of my misfortune that I have weakened the confidence one dear friend has in another, and made one look cool upon another. My poor cousin Dolly, you see, has reason to regret on this account, as well as my aunt. Miss Howe, my dear Miss Howe, is but too sensible of the effects of my fault, having had more words with her mother on my account, than ever she had on any other. Yet the man who has drawn me into all this evil I must be thrown upon!—Much did I consider, much did I apprehend, *before* my fault, supposing I *were* to be guilty of it: but I saw it not in all its shocking lights.

And now, to know that my father, an hour before he

received the tidings of my supposed flight, owned that he loved me as his life: that he would have been all condescension: that he would—Oh! my dear, how tender, how mortifyingly tender now in him! My aunt need not have been afraid, that it should be known that she has sent me such a letter as this!—A father to kneel to his child!—There would not indeed have been any bearing of that!—What I should have done in such a case, I know not. Death would have been much more welcome to me than such a sight, on such an occasion, in behalf of a man so very, very disgustful to me!—But I had deserved annihilation, had I suffered my father to kneel in vain.

Yet, had but the sacrifice of *inclination* and *personal preference* been *all*, less than KNEELING should have done. My *duty* should have been the conqueror of my *inclination*. But an aversion—an aversion so *very* sincere!—The triumph of a cruel and ambitious brother, ever so uncontrollable, joined with the insults of an envious sister, bringing wills to *theirs*, which otherwise would have been favourable to *me:* the marriage duties, so absolutely indispensable, so solemnly to be engaged for: the marriage intimacies (permit me to say to you, my friend, what the purest, although with apprehension, must think of) so *very* intimate: myself one who never looked upon any duty, much less a voluntary vowed one, with indifference; could it have been honest in me to have given my hand to an odious hand, and to have consented to such a more than reluctant, such an *immiscible* union, if I may so call it?—For life too!—Did not I *think* more and deeper than most young creatures think; did I not *weigh*, did I not *reflect*, I might perhaps have been less obstinate.—*Delicacy* (may I presume to call it?) *thinking, weighing, reflection,* are not blessings (I have not found them such) in the degree I have them. I wish I had been able, in some very nice cases, to have known what *indifference* was; yet not to have my *ignorance* imputable to me as a fault. Oh! my dear! the finer sensibilities, if I may suppose mine to be such, make not happy.

What a method had my friends intended to take with me? This, I daresay, was a method chalked out by my

brother. *He,* I suppose, was to have presented me to all my assembled friends, as the daughter capable of preferring her own will to the wills of them all. It would have been a sore trial, no doubt. Would to heaven, however, I had stood it—let the issue have been what it would, would to heaven I had stood it!

There may be murder, my aunt says. This looks as if she knew of Singleton's rash plot. Such an *upshot,* as *she* calls it, of this unhappy affair, heaven avert.

She flies a thought, that I can *less* dwell upon—a *cruel* thought—but she has a poor opinion of the purity she compliments me with, if she thinks that I am not, by GOD'S grace, above temptation from this sex. Although I never saw a man, whose *person* I could like, before this man; yet his faulty character allowed me but little merit from the indifference I pretended to on his account. But now I see him *in nearer lights,* I like him less than ever. Unpolite, cruel, insolent!—Unwise! A trifler with his own happiness; the destroyer of mine!—His last treatment—*my fate too visibly in his power—master of his own wishes* [shame to say it], *if he knew what to wish for.*—Indeed I never liked him so little as now. Upon my word, I think I could hate him (if I do not already hate him) sooner than any man I ever thought tolerably of—a good reason why: because I have been more disappointed in my expectations of him; although they never were so high, *as to have made him my choice in preference to the single life, had that been permitted me.* Still, if the giving him up for ever will make my path to reconciliation easy, and if they will signify as much to me, they shall see that I never will be *his:* for I have the vanity to think my soul his soul's superior.

You will say I rave: forbidden to write to my aunt, and taught to despair of reconciliation, you, my dear, must be troubled with my passionate resentments. What a wretch was I to give him a meeting, since by that I put it out of my power to meet my assembled friends!—All would now, if I had met them, have been over; and who can tell when my present distresses will?—Rid of both men, I had been

now perhaps at my aunt Hervey's or at my uncle Antony's wishing for my cousin Morden's arrival: who might have accommodated all.

I *intended*, indeed, to have stood it: and if I had, how know I by whose name I might now have been called For how should I have resisted a condescending, a *kneelin* father, had he been able to have kept his temper with me?

Yet my aunt says he would have relented, if *I* had no Perhaps he would have been moved by my humility, before he could have shown such *undue* condescension. Such temper as he would have received me with might have been improved upon in my favour. And that he had designed *ultimately* to relent, how it clears my friends (at least t themselves) and condemns me? Oh, why were my aunt hints (I remember them now) so very dark?—Yet I intended to have returned after the interview; and then perhaps she would have explained herself.—Oh, this artful, this designing Lovelace—yet I must repeat, that most ought I to blame myself for meeting him.

But far, far, be banished from me fruitless recrimination Far banished, *because* fruitless! Let me wrap myself about in the mantle of my own integrity, and take comfort in my unfaulty intention! Since it is now too late to look back let me collect all my fortitude, and endeavour to stand those shafts of angry Providence, which it will not permit me to shun! That whatever the trials may be which I am destined to undergo, I may not behave unworthily in them, and may come out amended by them.

Join with me in this prayer, my beloved friend; for your own honour's sake, as well as for love's sake, join with me in it: lest a deviation on my side should, with the censorious cast a shade upon a friendship which has no levity in it and the basis of which is improvement, as well in the greater as lesser duties.

CL. HARLOWE.

LETTER LXIX.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Saturday Afternoon, April 22.

Oh, my best, my *only* friend! Now indeed is my heart broken! It has received a blow it never will recover. Think not of corresponding with a wretch who now seems absolutely devoted. How can it be otherwise, if a parent's curses have the weight I always attributed to them, and have heard so many instances in confirmation of that weight! —Yes, my dear Miss Howe, superadded to all my afflictions, I have the consequences of a father's curse to struggle with! How shall I support this reflection!—My past and my present situation so much authorising my apprehensions!

I have at last a letter from my unrelenting sister. Would to heaven I had not provoked it by my second letter to my aunt Hervey! It lay ready for me, it seems. The thunder slept, till I awakened it. I enclose the letter itself. Transcribe it I cannot. There is no bearing the thoughts of it: for [shocking reflection!] the curse extends to the life beyond this.

I am in the depth of vapourish despondency. I can only repeat—shun, fly, correspond not with a wretch so devoted as

Cl. Harlowe.

—o—

LETTER LXX.

To Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

To be left at Mr. Osgood's, near Soho Square.

Friday, April 21.

It was *expected* you would send again to me, or to my aunt Hervey. The enclosed has lain ready for you, therefore by direction. You will have no answer from anybody, write to *whom* you will, and as *often* as you will, and *what* you will.

It was designed to bring you back by proper authority, or to send you whither the disgraces you have brought upon us all should be in the likeliest way, after a while, to be forgotten. But I believe that design is over: so you may *range* securely—nobody will think it worth while to give themselves any trouble about you. Yet my mother has obtained leave to send you your clothes of all sorts; but your clothes only This is a favour you'll see by the within letter not *designed* you: and *now* not granted for your sake, but because my poor mother cannot bear in her sight anything you used to wear. Read the enclosed, and tremble.

ARABELLA HARLOWE.

To the Most Ungrateful and Undutiful of Daughters.

HARLOWE PLACE, *April* 15.

SISTER THAT WAS!—For I know not what name you are *permitted,* or *choose* to go by.

You have filled us all with distraction. My father, in the first agitations of his mind, on discovering your wicked, your shameful elopement, imprecated on his knees a fearful curse upon you. Tremble at the recital of it!—No less than 'that you may meet your punishment both *here* and *here-* 'after, by means of the very wretch in whom you have 'chosen to place your wicked confidence.'

Your clothes will not be sent you. You seem, by leaving them behind you, to have been secure of them, whenever you demanded them, but perhaps you could think of nothing but meeting your fellow:—nothing but how to get off your forward self!—For everything seems to have been forgotten but what was to contribute to your wicked flight.—Yet you judged right, perhaps, that you would have been detected had you endeavoured to get away your clothes.—Cunning creature! not to make *one* step that we could guess at you by! Cunning to effect your own ruin, and the disgrace of all the family!

But does the wretch put you upon writing for your things,

for fear you should be too expensive to him?—That's it, I suppose.

Was there ever a giddier creature?—Yet this is the celebrated, the blazing Clarissa—Clarissa *what? Harlowe*, no doubt!—And Harlowe it will be, to the disgrace of us all!

Your drawings and your pieces are all taken down; as is also your own whole-length picture, in the Vandyke taste, from your late parlour: they are taken down, and thrown into your closet, which will be nailed up, as if it were not a part of the house, there to perish together: for who can bear to see them? Yet, how did they use to be shown to everybody: the former, for the magnifying of your dainty finger-works; the latter, for the imputed dignity (dignity now in the dust!) of your boasted figure; and this by those fond parents from whom you have run away with so *much*, yet with so little contrivance!

My brother vows revenge upon your libertine—for the *family's* sake he vows it—not for *yours!*—for he will treat you, he declares, like a common creature, if ever he sees you: and doubts not that this will be your fate.

My uncle Harlowe renounces you for ever.

So does my uncle Antony.

So does my aunt Hervey.

So do *I*, base, unworthy creature! the disgrace of a good family, and the property of an infamous rake, as questionless you will soon find yourself, if you are not already.

Your books, since they have not taught you what belongs to your family, to your sex, and to your education, will not be sent you. Your money neither. Nor yet the jewels so undeservedly made yours. For it is wished you may be seen a beggar along London streets.

If all this is heavy, lay your hand to your heart, and ask yourself, why you have deserved it?

Every man whom your pride taught you to reject with scorn (Mr. Solmes excepted, who, however, has reason to rejoice that he missed you) triumphs in your shameful elopement, and now knows how to account for his being refused.

Your worthy Norton is ashamed of you, and mingles her

tears with your mother's; both reproaching themselves for their shares in you, and in so fruitless an education.

Everybody, in short, is ashamed of you: but none more than

ARABELLA HARLOWE.

—o—

LETTER LXXI.

Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

Tuesday, April 25.

BE comforted; be not dejected; do not despond, my dearest and best-beloved friend. God Almighty is just and gracious, and gives not His assent to rash and inhuman curses. Can you think that Heaven will seal to the black passions of its depraved creatures? If it did, malice, envy, and revenge would triumph; and the best of the human race, blasted by the malignity of the worst, would be miserable in both worlds.

This outrageousness shows only what manner of spirit they are of, and how much their sordid views exceed their parental love. 'Tis all owing to rage and disappointment—disappointment in designs proper to be frustrated.

If you consider this malediction as it ought to be considered, a person of your piety must and will rather pity and pray for your *rash father*, than terrify *yourself* on the occasion. None but God can curse; parents or others, whoever they be, can only pray to Him to curse: and such prayers can have no weight with a just and all-perfect Being, the motives to which are unreasonable, and the end proposed by them cruel.

Has not God commanded us *to bless and curse not?* Pray for your father then, I repeat, that he incur not the malediction he has announced on you; since he has broken, as you see, a command truly divine; while you, by obeying that other precept which enjoins us *to pray for them that persecute and curse us*, will turn the curse into a blessing.

My mother blames them for this wicked letter of your sister; and she pities you; and, of her own accord, wished me to write to comfort you, for this once: for she says, it is pity your heart, which was so noble (and when the sense of your fault, and the weight of a parent's curse are so strong upon you), should be quite broken.

Lord bless me, how your aunt writes!—Can there be two rights and two wrongs in palpable cases!—But, my dear, she *must* be wrong: so they all have been, justify themselves now as they will. They can only justify themselves *to* themselves from selfish principles, resolving to *acquit*, not fairly to *try* themselves. Did your unkind aunt, in all the tedious progress of your contentions with them, give you the least hope of their relenting?—Her dark hints now I recollect as well as you. But why was anything good or hopeful to be darkly hinted?—How easy was it for *her*, who pretended always to love you; for *her*, who can give such flowing license to her pen for your hurt; to have given you one word, one line (in confidence) of their pretended change of measures!

But do not mind their after-pretences, my dear—all of them serve but for tacit confessions of their vile usage of you. I will keep your aunt's secret, never fear. I would not, on any consideration, that my mother should see her letter.

You will now see that you have nothing left but to overcome all scrupulousness, and marry as soon as you have an opportunity. Determine so to do, my dear.

I will give you a motive for it, regarding myself. For this I have resolved, and this I have vowed [O friend, the best beloved of my heart, be not angry with me for it!], 'That so long as your happiness is in suspense, I will 'never think of marrying.' In justice to the man I shall have, I have vowed this: for, my dear, must I not be miserable, if you are so? And what an unworthy wife must I be to any man who cannot have interest enough in my heart to make his obligingness a balance for an affliction he has not caused?

I would show Lovelace your sister's abominable letter, were it to me. I enclose it. It shall not have a place in this house. This will enter him of course into the subject which you now ought to have most in view. Let him see what you suffer for him. He cannot prove base to such an excellence. I should never enjoy my head or my senses should this man prove a villain to you!—With a merit so exalted, you may have punishment more than enough for your involuntary fault in that husband.

I would not have you be too sure that their project to seize you is over. The words intimating that it *is* over, in the letter of that abominable Arabella, seem calculated to give you security.—She only says she *believes* that design is over. And I do not yet find from Miss Lloyd that it is disavowed. So it will be best, when you are in London, to be private, and, for fear of the worst, to let every direction be to a *third place;* for I would not, for the world, have you fall into the hands of such flaming and malevolent spirits by surprise.

I will myself be content to direct to you at *some third place;* and I shall then be able to aver to my mother, or to any other, if occasion be, *that I know not where you are.*

Besides, this measure will make you less apprehensive of the consequences of their violence, should they resolve to attempt to carry you off in spite of Lovelace.

I would have you direct to Mr. Hickman, even your answer to this. I have a reason for it. Besides, my mother, notwithstanding this particular indulgence, is very positive. They have prevailed upon her, I know, to give her word to this purpose—Spiteful, poor wretches! How I hate in particular your foolish uncle Antony.

I would not have your thoughts dwell on the contents of your sister's shocking letter; but pursue other subjects —the subjects before you. And let me know your progress with Lovelace, and what he says to this diabolical curse. So far you may enter into this hateful subject. I expect that this will aptly introduce the grand topic between you, without needing a mediator.

Come, my dear, when things are at worst they will mend. Good often comes when evil is expected.—But if you despond, there can be no hopes of cure. Don't let them break your heart; for that is plain to me, is now what some people have in view to do.

How poor to withhold from you your books, your jewels, and your money! As money is all you can at present want, since they will vouchsafe to send your clothes, I send fifty guineas by the bearer, enclosed in single papers in my *Norris's Miscellanies.* I charge you, as you love me, return them not.

I have more at your service. So, if you like not your lodgings or his behaviour when you get to town, leave both them and him out of hand.

I would advise you to write to Mr. Morden without delay. If he intends for England, it may hasten him. And you will do very well till he can come. But surely Lovelace will be infatuated, if he secure not his happiness by *your consent,* before that of Mr. Morden's is made needful on his arrival.

Once more, my dear, let me beg of you to be comforted. Manage with your usual prudence the stake before you, and all will still be happy. Suppose yourself to be *me,* and me to be *you* [you *may*—for your distress is mine], and then you will add full day to these but glimmering lights which are held out to you by

Your ever affectionate and faithful

ANNA HOWE.

I hurry this away by Robert. I will inquire into the truth of your aunt's pretences about the change of measures which she says they intended in case you had not gone away.

—o—

LETTER LXXII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Wednesday Morning, April 26.

YOUR letter, my beloved Miss Howe, gives me great comfort. How sweetly do I experience the truth of the wise man's observation, *That a faithful friend is the medicine of life!*

Your messenger finds me just setting out for London: the chaise at the door. Already I have taken leave of the good widow, who has obliged me with the company of her eldest daughter, at Mr. Lovelace's request, while he rides by us. The young gentlewoman is to return in two or three days with the chaise, in its way to my Lord M.'s Hertfordshire seat.

I received my sister's dreadful letter on Sunday, when Mr. Lovelace was out. He saw, on his return, my *extreme anguish and dejection;* and he was told *how much worse I had been:* for I had fainted away more than once.

I think the contents of it have touched my head as well as my heart.

He would fain have seen it. But I would not permit that, because of the threatenings he would have found in it against himself. As it *was*, the effect it had upon me made him break out into execrations and menaces. I was so ill that he himself advised me to delay going to town on Monday, as I proposed to do.

He is extremely regardful and tender of me. All that you supposed *would* follow this violent letter from him, *has* followed it. He has offered himself to my acceptance in so unreserved a manner, that I am concerned I have written so freely and so diffidently of him. Pray, my dearest friend, keep to yourself everything that may appear disreputable of him from me.

I must acquaint you that his kind behaviour, and my low-spiritedness, co-operating with your former advice and

my unhappy situation, made me that very Sunday evening *receive unreservedly his declarations:* and now indeed I am more in his power than ever.

He presses me every hour (indeed as *needlessly*, as *unkindly*) for fresh tokens of my esteem *for* him, and confidence in him. And as I have been brought to *some verbal concessions*, if he should prove unworthy, I am sure I shall have great reason to blame this violent letter: for I have no resolution at all. Abandoned thus of all my natural friends, of whose returning favour I have now no hopes, and only you to pity me, and *you* restrained, as I may say, I have been forced to turn my desolate heart to such protection as I could find.

All my comfort is, that your advice repeatedly given to the same purpose, in your kind letter before me, warrants me. I now set out the more cheerfully to London on that account: for before, a heavy weight hung upon my heart; and although I thought it best and safest to go, yet my spirits sunk, I know not why, at every motion I made towards a preparation for it.

I hope no mischief will happen on the road.—I hope these violent spirits will not meet.

Every one is waiting for me.—Pardon me, my best, my kindest friend, that I return your Norris. In these more promising prospects, I cannot have occasion for your favour. Besides, I have some hope that with my clothes they will send me the money I wrote for, although it is denied me in the letter. If they do not, and if I should have occasion, I can but signify my wants to so ready a friend. And I have promised to be obliged only to you. But I had rather methinks you should have it *still to say*, if challenged, that nothing of this nature has been either requested or done. I say this with a view entirely to my future hopes of recovering your mother's favour, which, next to that of my own father and mother, I am most solicitous to recover.

I must acquaint you with one thing more, notwithstanding my hurry; and that is, that Mr. Lovelace offered either to attend me to Lord M.'s, or to send for his chaplain

yesterday. He pressed me to consent to this proposal most earnestly, and even seemed desirous rather to have the ceremony pass here than in London: for when there, I had told him, it was time enough to consider of so weighty and important a matter. Now, upon the receipt of your kind, your consolatory letter, methinks I could almost wish it had been *in my power* to comply with his earnest solicitations. But this dreadful letter *has unhinged my whole frame.* Then some *little punctilio* surely is necessary. No preparation made. No articles drawn. No license ready. Grief so extreme: no pleasure in prospect, nor so much as in wish—oh, my dear, who could think of entering into so solemn an engagement? Who, *so* unprepared, could seem to be *so* ready!

If I could flatter myself that my indifference to all the joys of this life proceeded from *proper* motives, not rather from the disappointments and mortifications my pride has met with, how much rather, I think, should I choose to be wedded to my shroud than to any man on earth!

Indeed I have at present no pleasure but in *your* friendship. Continue that to me, I beseech you. If my heart rises hereafter to a capacity of more, it must be built on that foundation.

My spirits sink again on setting out. Excuse this depth of vapourish dejection, which forbids me even *hope*, the cordial that keeps life from stagnating, and which never was denied me till within these eight and forty hours.

But 'tis time to relieve you.

Adieu, my best beloved and kindest friend! Pray for your

CLARISSA.

—o—

LETTER LXXIII.

Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

Thursday, April 27.

I AM sorry you sent back my Norris. But you must be allowed to do as you please. So must I, in my turn. We must neither of us, perhaps, expect absolutely of the other

what is the rightest to be done: and yet few folks, so young as we are, *better* know *what that rightest is.* I cannot separate myself from you; although I give a double instance of my vanity in joining myself with you in this particular assertion.

I am most heartily rejoiced that your prospects are so much mended; and that, as I hoped, good has been produced out of evil. What must the man have been, what must have been his views, had he not taken such a turn, upon a letter so vile, and upon a treatment so unnatural, himself principally the occasion of it?

You *know best* your *motives* for suspending: but I wish you *could* have taken him at offers so earnest.* Why should you not have permitted him to send for Lord M.'s chaplain? If punctilio only was in the way, and want of a license, and of proper preparations, and such like, my service to you, my dear: and there is ceremony tantamount to your ceremony.

Do not, do not, my dear friend, *again* be so very melancholy a decliner as to prefer a shroud, when the matter you wish for is in your power; and when, as you have justly said heretofore, persons *cannot die when they will.*

But it is a strange perverseness in human nature that we slight that when near us which at a distance we wish for.

You have now but one point to pursue: that is marriage: let that be solemnised. Leave the rest to Providence, and, to use your own words in a former letter, follow as that leads. You will have a handsome man, a genteel man; he would be a *wise* man, if he were not vain of his endowments, and wild and intriguing: but while the eyes of many of our sex, taken by so specious a form and so brilliant a spirit, encourage that vanity, you must be contented to stay till grey hairs and prudence enter upon the stage together. You would not have everything in the same man.

* Mr. Lovelace in his next letter tells his friend how extremely ill the lady was, recovering from fits to fall into stronger fits, and nobody expecting her life. She had not, he says, acquainted Miss Howe how *very* ill she was.—In the next letter she tells Miss Howe, that her motives for suspending were not *merely ceremonious* ones.

I believe Mr. Hickman treads no crooked paths, but he hobbles most ungracefully in a straight one. Yet Mr. Hickman, though he *pleases* not my eye, nor *diverts* my ear, will not, as I believe, *disgust* the one, nor *shock* the other. Your man, as I have lately said, will always keep up attention; you will always be alive with him, though perhaps more from fears than hopes: while Mr. Hickman will neither say anything to keep one awake, nor yet, by shocking adventures, make one's slumbers uneasy.

I believe I now know which of the two men so prudent a person as *you* would, at first, have chosen; nor doubt I that you can guess which *I* would have made choice of, if I might. But proud as we are, the proudest of us all can *only* refuse, and many of us accept the but half-worthy, for fear a still worse should offer.

If men had chosen their mistresses for spirits like their own, although Mr. Lovelace, at the long run, might have been *too many for me*, I don't doubt but I should have given heart-ache for heart-ache, for one half-year at least; while you, with my dull-swift, would have glided on *as* serenely, *as* calmly, *as* unaccountably, as the succeeding seasons; and varying no otherwise than they, to bring on new beauties and conveniences to all about you.

I WAS going on in this style—but my mother broke in upon me with a prohibitory aspect. 'She gave me leave for one letter only.'—She had just parted with your odious uncle, and they have been in close conference again.

She has vexed me. I must lay this by till I hear from you again, not knowing whither to send it.

Direct me to a *third place*, as I desired in my former.

I told my mother (on her challenging me) that I was writing indeed, and to you: but it was only to amuse myself; for I protested *that I knew not where to send to you.*

I hope that your next may inform me of your nuptials, although the next to that were to acquaint me that he was the ungratefullest monster on earth; as he must be, if not the kindest husband in it.

My mother has vexed me. But so, on revising, I wrote efore.—But she has *unhinged me*, as you call it: pretended) catechise Hickman, I assure you, for contributing to our ıpposed correspondence. Catechised him *severely* too, pon my word!—I believe I have a sneaking kindness for ıe sneaking fellow, for I cannot endure that anybody hould treat him like a fool but myself.

I believe, between you and me, the good lady forgot erself. I heard her loud. She possibly imagined that my ather was come to life again. Yet the meekness of the nan might have soon convinced her, I should have thought; or my father, it seems, would talk as loud as she, I suppose though within a few yards of each other), as if both were ıut of their way, and were hallooing at half a mile's disance, to get in again.

I know you'll blame me for this sauciness—but I told ou I was vexed: and if I had not a spirit, my parentage on oth sides might be doubted.

You must not chide me too severely, however, because I ave learned of you not to defend myself in an error: and own I am wrong: and that's enough: you won't be so nerous in this case as you are in every other, if you don't ink it is.

Adieu, my dear! I must, I will love you, and love you r ever! So subscribes your

ANNE HOWE.

—o—

LETTER LXXIV.

From Miss Howe.

[Enclosed in the above.]

Thursday, April 27.

I HAVE been making inquiry, as I told you I would, whether your relations had really (before you left them) esolved upon that change of measures which your aunt ientions in her letter; and by laying together several pieces

of intelligence, some drawn from my mother, through your uncle Antony's communications; some from Miss Lloyd, by your sister's; and some by a third way that I shall not tell you of; I have reason to think the following a true state of the case.

'That there was no intention of a change of measures till 'within two or three days of your going away. On the 'contrary, your brother and sister, though they had no hope 'of prevailing with you in Solmes's favour, were resolved 'never to give over their persecutions till they had pushed 'you upon taking some step, which, by help of *their good* '*offices*, should be deemed inexcusable by the half-witted 'souls they had to play upon.

'But that, at last, your mother (tired with, and perhaps 'ashamed of the passive part she had acted) thought fit to 'declare to Miss Bell, that she was determined to try to 'put an end to the family feuds, and to get your uncle 'Harlowe to second her endeavours.

'This alarmed your brother and sister, and then a change 'of measures was resolved upon. Solmes's offers were, 'however, too advantageous to be given up; and your 'father's condescension was now to be their sole depend-'ence, and (as *they* give it out) the trying of what that 'would do with you, their last effort.'

And indeed, my dear, this must have succeeded, I verily think, with such a daughter as they had to deal with, could that father, who never, I daresay, kneeled in his life but to his God, have so far condescended as your aunt writes he would.

But then, my dear, what would this have done?—Perhaps you would have given Lovelace the *meeting*, in hopes to pacify him, and prevent mischief; supposing that they had given you time, and not hurried you directly into the state. But if you had *not* met him, you see that he was resolved to visit them, and well attended too: and what must have been the consequence?

So that, upon the whole, we know not but matters may be best as they *are*, however disagreeable that *best* is.

I hope your considerate and thoughtful mind will make a good use of this hint. Who would not with patience sustain even a great evil, if she could persuade herself that it was kindly dispensed, in order to prevent a *still* greater?—Especially if she could sit down, as you can, and acquit her own heart?

Permit me one further observation—Do we not see, from the above state of the matter, what might have been done before *by the worthy person* of your family, had she exerted the *mother*, in behalf of a child so meritorious, yet so much oppressed?

Adieu, my dear. I will be ever yours.

ANNA HOWE.

[Clarissa, in her answer to the first of the two last letters, chides her friend for giving so little weight to her advice, in relation to her behaviour to her mother. It may be proper to insert here the following extracts from that answer, though a little before the time.]

You assume, my dear, says she, your usual and ever-agreeable style in what you write of the two gentlemen,* and how unaptly you think they have chosen; Mr. Hickman in addressing you, Mr. Lovelace me. But I am inclinable to believe that, with a view to happiness, however two mild tempers might agree, two high ones would make sad work of it, both at one time violent and unyielding. You two might, indeed, have racqueted the ball betwixt you, as you say.† But Mr. Hickman, by his gentle manners, seems formed for you, if you go not too far with him. If you do, it would be a tameness in him to bear it, which would make a man more contemptible than Mr. Hickman can ever deserve to be made. Nor is it a disgrace for even a brave man, who knows what a woman is to vow to him *afterwards*, to be very obsequious *beforehand*.

Do you think it is to the credit of Mr. Lovelace's character that he can be offensive and violent?—Does he not, as all

* See Letter L. and Letter LI. of this volume.

† See Letter LI. of this volume.

such spirits must, subject himself to the necessity of making submissions for his excesses far more mortifying to a proud heart than those condescensions which the high-spirited are so apt to impute as a weakness of mind in such a man as Mr. Hickman?

Let me tell you, my dear, that Mr. Hickman is such a one as would rather bear an affront *from* a lady, than offer one *to* her. He had rather, I daresay, that she should have occasion to ask *his* pardon than he *hers*. But, my dear, *you have outlived your first passion*; and had the second man been an angel, he would not have been more than indifferent to you.

My motives for suspending, proceeds she, were not *merely ceremonious ones*. I was really very ill. I could not hold up my head. The contents of my sister's letters had pierced my heart. Indeed, my dear, I was *very* ill. And was I, moreover, to be as ready to accept his offer as if I were afraid *he never would repeat it?*

I see with great regret that your mamma is still immovably bent against our correspondence. What shall I do about it?—It goes against me to continue it, or to wish you to favour me with returns.—Yet I have so managed my matters that I have no friend but you to advise with. It is enough to make one indeed wish to be married to this man, though a man of errors, as he has worthy relations of my own sex; and I should have some friends, I hope:—and having *some*, I might have *more*—for as money is said to increase money, so does the countenance of persons of character increase friends: while the destitute *must* be destitute.—It goes against my heart to beg of you to discontinue corresponding with me; and yet it is against my conscience to carry it on against parental prohibition. But I dare not use all the arguments against it that I could use—And why? —For fear I should convince you; and you should reject me as the rest of my friends have done. I leave therefore the determination of this point upon you.—I am not, I find, to be trusted with it. But be *mine* all the fault, and all the punishment, if it be punishable!—And certainly it must,

when it can be the cause of those over-lively sentences wherewith you conclude the letter I have before me, and which I must no farther animadvert upon, because you forbid me to do so.

[To the second letter, among other things, she says],

So, my dear, you seem to think that there was a *fate* in my error. The cordial, the considerate friendship is seen in the observation you make on this occasion. Yet since things have happened as they have, would to Heaven I could hear that all the world acquitted my father, or, at least, my mother! whose character, before these family feuds broke out, was the subject of every one's admiration. Don't let anybody say from you, so that it may come to *her* ear, that she might, by a timely exertion of her fine talents, have saved her unhappy child. You will observe, my dear, that *in her own good time*, when she saw that there was not likely to be an end to my brother's persecutions, she resolved to exert herself. But the pragmatical daughter, *by the fatal meeting*, precipitated all, and frustrated her indulgent designs. Oh, my love, I am now convinced, by dear experience, that while children are so happy as to have parents or guardians whom they *may* consult, they should not presume (no, not with the best and purest intentions) to follow their own conceits in material cases.

A ray of hope of future reconciliation darts in upon my mind, from the intention you tell me my mother had to exert herself in my favour, had I not gone away. And my hope is the stronger, as this communication points out to me, that my *uncle Harlowe's interest* is likely, in my mother's opinion, to be of weight, if it could be engaged. It will behove me, perhaps, to apply to that dear uncle, if a proper occasion offer.

—o—

LETTER LXXV.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Monday, April 24.

FATE is weaving a whimsical web for thy friend; and I see not but I shall be inevitably manacled.

Here have I been at work, dig, dig, dig, like a cunning miner, at one time, and spreading my snares, like an artful fowler, at another, and exulting in my contrivances to get this inimitable creature absolutely into my power. Everything made for me. Her brother and uncles were but my pioneers: her father stormed as I directed him to storm: Mrs. Howe was acted by the springs I set at work; her daughter was moving for me, and yet imagined herself plumb against me: and the dear creature herself had already run her stubborn neck into my gin, and knew not that she was caught, for I had not drawn my sprindges close about her—and just as all this was completed, wouldst thou believe, that I should be my own enemy, and her friend? That I should be so totally diverted from all my favourite purposes, as to propose to marry her before I went to town, in order to put it out of my own power to resume them.

When thou knowest this, wilt thou not think that my black angel plays me booty, and has taken it into his head to urge me on to the indissoluble tie, that he might be more sure of me (from the complex transgressions to which he will certainly stimulate me, when wedded) than perhaps he thought he could be from the simple sins, in which I have so long allowed myself, that they seem to have the plea of habit?

Thou wilt be still the more surprised, when I tell thee, that there seems to be a coalition going forward between the black angels and the white ones; for here has hers induced her, in one hour, and by one retrograde accident, to *acknowledge* what the charming creature never before acknowledged, a preferable favour for me. She even avows an intention to

be mine.—Mine! without reformation conditions!—She permits me to talk of love to her!—of the irrevocable ceremony!—Yet, another extraordinary! postpones that ceremony; chooses to set out for London; and even to go to the widow's in town.

Well, but how comes all this about? methinks thou askest.—Thou, Lovelace, dealest in wonders, yet aimest not at the *marvellous!*—How did all this come about?

I will tell thee—I was *in danger of losing my charmer for ever!* She was soaring upward to her native skies! She was got above earth, by means too, of the *earthborn!* And something extraordinary was to be done to keep her with us sublunaries. And what so effectually as the soothing voice of love, and the attracting offer of matrimony from a man not hated, can fix the attention of the maiden heart, aching with uncertainty, and before impatient of the questionable question?

This, in short, was the case: while she was refusing all manner of obligation to me, keeping me at haughty distance, in hopes that her cousin Morden's arrival would soon fix her in a full and absolute independence of me—disgusted, likewise, at her adorer, for holding himself the reins of his own passions, instead of giving them up to her control—she writes a letter, urging an answer to a letter before sent, for her apparel, her jewels, and some gold, which she had left behind her; all which was to save her pride from obligation, and to promote the independence her heart was set upon. And what followed but a shocking answer, made still more shocking by the communication of a father's curse, upon a daughter deserving only blessings?—A curse upon the curser's heart, and a double one upon the transmitter's, the spiteful, the envious Arabella!

Absent when it came—on my return I found her recovering from fits, again to fall into stronger fits; and nobody expecting her life; half a dozen messengers despatched to find me out. Nor wonder at her being so affected; she, whose filial piety gave her dreadful faith in a father's curses; and the curse of this gloomy tyrant extending (to use her

own words, when she could speak) *to both worlds*—Oh, that it had turned, in the moment of its utterance, to a mortal quinsey, and, sticking in his gullet, had choked the old execrator, as a warning to all such unnatural fathers!

What a miscreant had I been, not to have endeavoured to bring her back, by all the endearments, by all the vows, by all the offers, that I could make her!

I *did* bring her back. More than a father to her: for I have given her a life her unnatural father had well-nigh taken away. Shall I not cherish the fruits of my own benefaction? I was earnest in my vows to marry, and my ardour to urge the present time was a *real* ardour. But extreme dejection, with a mingled delicacy, that in her dying moments I doubt not she will preserve, have caused her to refuse me the *time*, though not the solemnity; for she has told me, that now she must be wholly in my protection [*being destitute of every other*]. More indebted, still, thy friend, as thou seest, to her cruel relations, than to herself, for her favour!

She has written to Miss Howe an account of their barbarity! but *has not acquainted her how very ill she was.*

Low, very low, she remains; yet, dreading her stupid brother's enterprise, she wants to be in London, where, but for *this* accident, and (wouldst thou have believed it?) for *my persuasions*, seeing her so very ill, she would have been this night; and we shall actually set out on Wednesday morning, if she be not worse.

And now for a few words with thee, on the heavy preachment of Saturday last.

Thou art apprehensive that the lady is now truly in danger; and it is a miracle, thou tellest me, if she withstand such an attempter!—'Knowing what we know of the sex, 'thou sayest, thou shouldst dread, wert thou me, to make 'further trial, lest thou shouldst succeed.' And, in another place, tellest me, 'That thou pleadest not for the state for 'any favour thou hast for it.'

What an advocate art thou for matrimony!—

Thou wert ever an unhappy fellow at argument. Does the trite stuff with which the rest of thy letter abounds, in *favour*

wedlock, strike with the force that this which I have anscribed does *against* it?

Thou takest great pains to convince me, and that from the stresses the lady is reduced to (chiefly by her friends' per-cutions and implacableness, I hope thou wilt own, and not om me, as yet) that the proposed trial will not be a fair ial. But let me ask thee, is not calamity the test of virtue? nd wouldst thou not have me value this charming creature pon *proof* of her merits?—Do I not intend to reward her y marriage, if she stand that *proof?*

But why repeat I what I have said before?—Turn back, hou egregious arguer, turn back to my long letter of the 3th,* and thou wilt there find every syllable of what thou ast written either answered or invalidated.

But I am not angry with thee, Jack. I love opposition. s gold is tried by fire, and virtue by temptation, so is erling wit by opposition. Have I not, before thou settest ut as an advocate for my fair one, often brought thee in, s making objections to my proceedings, for no other reason an to exalt myself by proving thee a man of straw? As Iomer raises up many of his champions, and gives them errible names, only to have them knocked on the head by is heroes.

However, take to thee this one piece of advice—Evermore e sure of being in the right, when thou presumest to sit lown to correct thy master.

And another, if thou wilt—never offer to invalidate the orce which a virtuous education ought to have in the sex, y endeavouring to find excuses for *their* frailty from the railty of ours. For are we not devils to each other?—They empt us—we tempt them. Because we *men* cannot resist emptation, is that a reason that *women* ought not, when he whole of their education is caution and warning against ur attempts? Do not their grandmothers give them one asy rule—Men are to ask—Women are to deny?

Well, but to return to my principal subject; let me bserve that, be my future resolutions what they will, as

* See Letter XXXIII. of this volume.

to this lady, the contents of the violent letter she has received have set me at least a month forward with her. I can now, as I hinted, talk of love and marriage, without control or restriction; her injunctions no more my terror.

In this sweetly familiar way shall we set out together for London. Mrs. Sorlings's eldest daughter, at my motion, is to attend her in the chaise, while I ride by way of escort: for she is extremely apprehensive of the Singleton plot; and has engaged me to be all patience, if anything should happen on the road. But nothing I am sure *will* happen: for, by a letter received just now from Joseph, I understand that James Harlowe has already laid aside his stupid project: and this by the earnest desire of all those of his friends to whom he had communicated it; who were afraid of the consequences that might attend it. But it is not over with *me*, however; although I am not determined at present as to the uses I may make of it.

My beloved tells me she shall have her clothes sent her. She hopes also her jewels, and some gold which she left behind her: but Joseph says, clothes *only* will be sent. I will not, however, tell her that: on the contrary, I say, there is no doubt but they will send *all* she wrote for. The greater her disappointment *from them*, the greater must be her dependence *on me*.

But after all, I hope I shall be enabled to be honest to a merit so transcendent. The devil take thee, though, for thy opinion, given so mal-à-propos, that she *may be* overcome.

If thou designest to be honest, methinkest thou sayest, why should not Singleton's plot be over with *thee*, as it is with her *brother?*

Because (if I *must* answer thee) where people are so modestly doubtful of what they are able to do, it is good to leave a loophole. And, let me add, that when a man's heart is set upon a point, and anything occurs to beat him off, he will find it very difficult, when the suspending reason ceases, to forbear resuming it.

LETTER LXXVI.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Tuesday, April 25.

ALL hands at work in preparation for London.—What makes my heart beat so strong? Why rises it to my throat in such half-choking flutters, when I think of what this removal may do for me? I am hitherto resolved to be honest, and that increases my wonder at these involuntary commotions. 'Tis a plotting villain of a heart: it ever was—and ever will be, I doubt. Such a joy when any roguery is going forward!—I so little its master!—A head, likewise, so well turned to answer the triangular varlet's impulses!—No matter—I will have one struggle with thee, old friend; and if I cannot overcome thee now, I never will again attempt to conquer thee.

The dear creature continues extremely low and dejected. Tender blossom! how unfit to contend with the rude and ruffling winds of passion, and haughty and insolent control. —Never till now from under the wing (it is not enough to say of indulging, but) of *admiring* parents; the mother's bosom only fit to receive this charming flower!

This was the reflection, that with mingled compassion, and augmented love, arose to my mind, when I beheld the charmer reposing her lovely face upon the bosom of the widow Sorlings, from a recovered fit, as I entered soon after she had received her execrable sister's letter. How lovely in her tears!—And as I entered, her lifted-up face significantly bespeaking my protection, as I thought. And can I be a villain to such an angel!—I hope not.—But why, Belford, why once more puttest thou me in mind, that she *may be* overcome? And why is her own reliance on my honour so late and so reluctantly shown?

But, after all, so low, so dejected continues she to be, that I am terribly afraid I shall have a vapourish wife if I *do* marry. I should then be doubly undone. Not that I shall

be *much at home with her, perhaps, after the first fortnight or so.* But when a man has been ranging, like the painful bee, from flower to flower, perhaps for a month together, and the thoughts of home and a wife begin to have their charms with him, to be received by a Niobe, who, like a wounded vine, weeps her vitals away, while she but involuntary curls about him; how shall I be able to bear that?

May heaven restore my charmer to health and spirits, I hourly pray—that a man may see whether she can love anybody but her father and mother! In *their* power, I am confident, it will be, at any time, to make her husband joyless; and that, as I hate them so heartily, is a shocking thing to reflect upon.—Something *more* than woman, an *angel,* in some things; but a *baby* in others: so father-sick! so family-fond!—What a poor chance stands a husband with such a wife! unless, forsooth, they vouchsafe to be reconciled to her, and *continue* reconciled!

It is infinitely better for her and for me that we should not marry. What a delightful manner of life [oh, that I could persuade her to it!] would the life of honour be with such a woman! The fears, the inquietudes, the uneasy days, the restless nights; all arising from doubts of having disobliged me! Every absence dreaded to be an absence for ever! And then how amply rewarded, and rewarding, by the rapture-causing return! Such a passion as this keeps love in a continual fervour—makes it all alive. The happy pair, instead of sitting dozing and nodding at each other, in opposite chimney corners, in a winter evening, and over a wintry love, always new to each other, and having always something to say.

Thou knowest, in my verses to my Stella, my mind on this occasion. I will lay those verses in her way, as if undesignedly, when we are together at the widow's; that is to say, if we do not soon go to church by consent. She will thence see what my notions are of wedlock. If she receives them with any sort of temper, that will be a foundation—and let me alone to build upon it.

Many a girl has been *carried,* who never would have

been *attempted*, had she showed a proper resentment, when her ears or her eyes were first invaded. I have tried a young creature by a bad book, a light quotation, or an indecent picture; and if she has borne that, or only blushed and not been angry; and more especially if she has leered and smiled; that girl have I, and old Satan, put down for our own. Oh, how I could warn these little rogues, if I would! Perhaps envy, more than virtue, will put me upon setting up beacons for them, when I grow old and joyless.

—o—

Tuesday Afternoon.

If you are in London when I get thither, you will see me soon. My charmer is a little better than she was: her eyes show it; and her harmonious voice, hardly audible last time I saw her, now begins to cheer my heart once more. But yet she has no love—no sensibility! There is no addressing her with those *meaning*, yet *innocent*, freedoms (innocent, *at first setting out*, they may be called) which soften others of her sex. The more strange this, as she now acknowledges preferable favour for me; and is highly susceptible of grief. Grief mollifies and enervates. The grieved mind looks round it, silently implores consolation, and loves the soother. Grief is ever an inmate with joy. Though they won't show themselves at the same window at *one* time; yet they have the whole house in common between them.

—o—

LETTER LXXVII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Wednesday, April 26.

At last my lucky star has directed us into the desired port, and we are safely landed.—Well says Rowe:—

> The wise and active conquer difficulties,
> By daring to attempt them. Sloth and folly
> Shiver and shrink at sight of toil and hazard,
> And *make* th' impossibility they *fear*.

But in the midst of my exultation, something, I know not what to call it, checks my joys, and glooms over my brighter prospects: if it be not conscience, it is wondrously like what I thought so, many, many years ago.

Surely, Lovelace, methinks thou sayest, thy good motions are not gone off already! Surely thou wilt not now at last be a villain to this lady!

I can't tell what to say to it. Why would not the dear creature accept of me, when I so sincerely offered myself to her acceptance? Things already appear with a very different face *now I have got her here.* Already have our mother and her daughters been about me:—'Charming 'lady! What a complexion! What eyes! What majesty 'in her person!—O Mr. Lovelace, you are a happy man! '*You owe us such a lady!*'—Then they remind me of my revenge, and of my hatred to her whole family.

Sally was so struck with her, at first sight, that she broke out to me in these lines of Dryden:—

> ———Fairer to be seen
> Than the fair lily on the flow'ry green!
> More fresh than May herself in blossoms new!

I sent to thy lodgings within half an hour after our arrival, to receive thy congratulation upon it, but thou wert at Edgware, it seems.

My beloved, who is charmingly amended, is retired to her constant employment writing. I must content myself with the same amusement, till she shall be pleased to admit me to her presence: for already have I given to every one her cue.

And, among the rest, who dost thou think is to be her maid servant?—Deb. Butler.

Ah, Lovelace!

And Ah, Belford!—It can't be otherwise. But what dost think Deb's name is to be? Why, Dorcas, Dorcas Wykes. And won't it be admirable, if, either through fear, fright, or good liking, we can get my beloved to accept of Dorcas Wykes for a bedfellow?

In so many ways will it be now in my power to have the dear creature, that I shall not know which of them to choose!

But here comes the widow with Dorcas Wykes in her hand, and I am to introduce them both to my fair one?

So, the honest girl is accepted—of good parentage—but, through a neglected education, plaguy illiterate: she can neither write, nor read writing. A kinswoman of Mrs. Sinclair—could not therefore well be refused, the widow in person recommending her; and the wench only taken till her Hannah can come. What an advantage has an imposing or forward nature over a courteous one! So here may something arise to lead into correspondences, and so forth. To be sure a person need not be *so wary, so cautious of what she writes, or what she leaves upon her table, or toilette, when her attendant cannot read.*

It would be a miracle, as thou sayest, if this lady can save herself.—And having gone so far, how can I recede? Then my revenge upon the Harlowes!—To have run away with a daughter of theirs, to make her a Lovelace—to make her one of a family so superior to her own—what a triumph, as I have heretofore observed,* to *them!* But to run away with her, and to bring her to my lure in the *other* light, what a mortification of their pride! What a gratification of my own!

Then these women are continually at me. These women, who, before my whole soul and faculties were absorbed in the love of this single charmer, used always to oblige me with the flower and first fruits of their garden! Indeed, indeed, my goddess should not have chosen this London widow's! But I daresay, if I *had,* she would *not.* People who will be dealing in contradiction ought to pay for it. And to be punished by the consequences of our own choice—what a moral lies there!—What a deal of good may I not be the occasion of from a little evil!

Dorcas is a neat creature, both in person and dress; her

* See Letter XXXII. of this volume.

countenance not vulgar. And I am in hopes, as I hinted above, that her lady will accept of her for her bedfellow, in a strange house, for a week or so. But I saw she had a dislike to her at her very first appearance; yet I thought the girl behaved very modestly—*over-did* it a little perhaps. Her ladyship shrunk back, and looked shy upon her. The doctrine of sympathies and antipathies is a surprising doctrine. But Dorcas will be excessively obliging, and win her lady's favour soon, I doubt not. I am secure in one of the wench's qualities, however—she is not to be corrupted. A great point that! since a lady and her maid, when heartily of one party, will be too hard for half a score devils.

The dear creature was no less shy when the widow first accosted her at her alighting. Yet I thought that honest Doleman's letter had prepared her for her masculine appearance.

And now I mention that letter, why dost thou not wish me joy, Jack?

Joy, of what?

Why, joy of my nuptials. Know then, that *said*, is *done*, with me, when I have a mind to have it so; and that we are actually man and wife! only that consummation has not passed: bound down to the contrary of that, by a solemn vow, till a reconciliation with her family take place. The women here are told so. They know it before my beloved knows it; and that, thou wilt say, is odd.

But how shall I do to make my fair one keep her temper on the intimation? *Why, is she not here?* At Mrs. Sinclair's?—But if she will hear reason, I doubt not to convince her, that she ought to acquiesce.

She will insist, I suppose, upon my leaving her, and that I shall not take up my lodgings under the same roof. But circumstances are changed since I first made her that promise. I have taken all the vacant apartments; and must carry this point also.

I hope in a while to get her with me to the public entertainments. She knows nothing of the town, and has seen less of its diversions than ever woman of her taste, her

fortune, her endowments, did see. She has, indeed, a natural politeness, which transcends all acquirement. The most capable of any one I ever knew of judging what a *hundred* things are, by seeing *one* of a like nature. Indeed she took so much pleasure in her own chosen amusements, till persecuted out of them, that she had neither leisure nor inclination for the town diversions.

These diversions will amuse, and the deuce is in it, if a little susceptibility will not put forth, now she receives my address; especially if I can manage it so as to be allowed to live under *one* roof with her. What though the sensibility be at first faint and reluctant, like the appearance of an early spring-flower in frosty weather, which seems afraid of being nipt by an easterly blast! That will be enough for me.

I hinted to thee in a former,* that I had provided books for the lady's in-door amusement. Sally and Polly are readers. My beloved's light closet was their library. And several pieces of devotion have been put in, bought on purpose at *second-hand.*

I was always for forming a judgment of the reading part of the sex by their books. The observations I have made on this occasion have been of great use to me, as well in England as out of it. The sagacious lady may possibly be as curious in this point as her Lovelace.

So much for the present. Thou seest that I have a great deal of business before me; yet I will write again soon.

[Mr. Lovelace sends another letter with this; in which he takes notice of young Miss Sorlings's setting out with them, and leaving them at Barnet: but as its contents are nearly the same with those in the lady's next letter, it is omitted.]

* See Letter LIV. of this volume.

LETTER LXXVIII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Wednesday Afternoon, April 26.

At length, my dearest Miss Howe, I am in London, and in my new lodgings. They are neatly furnished, and the situation, for the town, is pleasant.

But I think you must not ask me how I like the old gentlewoman. Yet she seems courteous and obliging.—Her kinswomen just appeared to welcome me at my alighting. They seemed to be genteel young women. But more of their aunt and them, as I shall see more.

Miss Sorlings has an uncle at Barnet, whom she found so very ill, that her uneasiness, on that account (having large expectations from him), made me comply with her desire to stay with him. Yet I wished, as her uncle did not expect her, that she would see me settled in London; and Mr. Lovelace was still more earnest that she would, offering to send her back again in a day or two, and urging that her uncle's malady threatened not a sudden change. But leaving the matter to *her choice*, after she knew what *would have been mine*, she made me not the expected compliment. Mr. Lovelace, however, made her a handsome present at parting.

His genteel spirit, on all occasions, makes me often wish him more consistent.

As soon as I arrived, I took possession of my apartment. I shall make good use of the light closet in it, if I stay here any time.

One of his attendants returns in the morning to The Lawn; and I made writing to you by him an excuse for my retiring.

And now give me leave to chide you, my dearest friend, for your rash, and I hope revocable resolution, not to make Mr. Hickman the happiest man in the world, while my happiness is in suspense. Suppose I were to be unhappy,

what, my dear, would this resolution of yours avail me? Marriage is the highest state of friendship: if happy, it lessens our cares, by dividing them, at the same time that it doubles our pleasures by a mutual participation. Why, my dear, if you love me, will you not rather give *another* friend to one who has *not two* that she is sure of? Had you married on your mother's last birthday, as she would have had you, I should not, I daresay, have wanted a refuge; that would have saved me many mortifications, and much disgrace.

HERE I was broke in upon by Mr. Lovelace; introducing the widow leading in a kinswoman of hers to attend me, if I approved of her, till my Hannah should come, or till I had provided myself with some other servant. The widow gave her many good qualities; but said, that she had one great defect; which was, that she could not write, nor read writing; that part of her education having been neglected when she was young: but for discretion, fidelity, obligingness, she was not to be outdone by anybody. So commended her likewise for her skill at the needle.

As for *her defect*, I can easily forgive that. She is very likely and genteel—too genteel indeed, I think, for a servant. But what I like least of all in her, she has a strange sly eye. I never saw such an eye: half-confident, I think. But indeed Mrs. Sinclair herself (for that is the widow's name), has an odd winking eye; and her respectfulness seems too much studied, methinks, for the London ease and freedom. But people can't help their looks, you know; and after all she is extremely civil and obliging.—And as for the young woman (Dorcas is her name), she will not be long with me.

I accepted her: how could I do otherwise (if I had had a mind to make objections, which, in my present situation, I had not), her aunt present, and the young woman also present; and Mr. Lovelace officious in his introducing them, to oblige me? But, upon their leaving me, I told *him* (who seemed inclinable to begin a conversation with

me), that I desired that this apartment might be considered as my retirement: that when I saw him it might be in the dining-room (which is up a few stairs; for this back house, being once two, the rooms do not all of them very conveniently communicate with each other), and that I might be as little broken in upon as possible, when I am here. He withdrew very respectfully to the door, but there stopt; and asked for my company *then* in the dining-room. If he were about setting out for other lodgings, I would go with him now, I told him; but, if he did not just then go, I would first finish my letter to Miss Howe.

I see he has no mind to leave me if he can help it. My brother's scheme may give him a pretence to try to engage me to dispense with his promise. But if I *now do* I must acquit him of it entirely.

My approbation of his tender behaviour in the midst of my grief, has given him a right, as he seems to think, of addressing me with all the freedom of an approved lover. I see by this man, that when once a woman embarks with this sex, there is no receding. One concession is but the prelude to another with them. He has been ever since Sunday last continually complaining of the distance I keep him at; and thinks himself entitled now to call in question my value for him; strengthening his doubts by my former declared readiness to give him up to a reconciliation with my friends; and yet has himself fallen off from that *obsequious tenderness*, if I may couple the words, which drew from me the concessions he builds upon.

While we were talking at the door, my new servant came up with an invitation to us both to tea. I said *he* might accept of it, if he pleased: but I must pursue my writing; and not choosing either tea or supper, I desired him to make my excuses below, as to both; and inform them of my choice to be retired as much as possible; yet to promise for me my attendance on the widow and her nieces at breakfast in the morning.

He objected particularly in the eye of strangers as to avoiding supper.

You know, said I, and you can tell them, that I seldom eat suppers. My spirits are low. You must never urge me against a declared choice. Pray, Mr. Lovelace, inform them of all my particularities. If they are obliging, they will allow for them—I come not hither to make new acquaintance.

I have turned over the books I found in my closet; and am not a little pleased with them; and think the better of the people of the house for their sakes.

Stanhope's Gospels; Sharp's, Tillotson's, and South's Sermons; Nelson's Feasts and Fasts; a Sacramental Piece of the Bishop of Man, and another of Dr. Gauden, Bishop of Exeter; and Inett's Devotions, are among the devout books:—and among those of a lighter turn, the following not ill-chosen ones: a Telemachus, in French; another in English; Steel's, Rowe's, and Shakspeare's Plays; that genteel Comedy of Mr. Cibber, The Careless Husband, and others of the same author; Dryden's Miscellanies; the Tatlers, Spectators, and Guardians; Pope's, and Swift's, and Addison's Works.

In the blank leaves of the Nelson and Bishop Gauden, is Mrs. Sinclair's name; and in those of most of the others, either Sarah Martin, or Mary Horton, the names of the two nieces.

I AM exceedingly out of humour with Mr. Lovelace: and have great reason to be so, as you will allow, when you have read the conversation I am going to give you an account of; for he would not let me rest till I gave him my company in the dining-room.

He began with letting me know, that he had been out to inquire after the character of the widow, which was the more necessary, he said, as he supposed that I would *expect his frequent absence.*

I *did,* I said; and that he would not think of taking up his lodging in the same house with me. But what, said I, is the result of your inquiry?

Why, indeed, the widow's character was, in the main, what he liked well enough. But as it was Miss Howe's

opinion, as I had told him, that my brother had not given over his scheme; as the widow lived by letting lodgings, and had others to let in the same part of the house, which might be taken by an enemy; he knew no better way than for him to take them all, as it could not be for a long time, *unless I would think of removing to others.*

So far was well enough. But as it was easy for me to see, that he spoke the slighter of the widow, in order to have a pretence to lodge here himself, I asked him his intention in that respect. And he frankly owned, that if I chose to stay here, he could not, as matters stood, think of leaving me for six hours together; and he had prepared the widow to expect that we should be here but for a few days; only till we could fix ourselves in a house suitable to our condition; and this, that I might be under the less embarrassment, if I pleased to remove.

Fix *our*-selves in a house, and *we*, and *our*, Mr. Lovelace. —Pray, in what light——

He interrupted me—Why, my dearest life, if you will hear me with patience—yet, I am half afraid that I have been too forward, as I have not consulted you upon it—but as my friends in town, according to what Mr. Doleman has written, in the letter you have seen, conclude us to be married——

Surely, sir, you have not presumed——

Hear me out, dearest creature—you have received with favour my addresses: you have made me hope for the honour of your consenting hand: yet, by declining my most fervent tender of myself to you at Mrs. Sorlings's, have given me apprehensions of delay: I would not for the world be thought so ungenerous a wretch, now you have honoured me with your confidence, *as to wish to precipitate you.* Yet your brother's schemes are not given up. Singleton, I am afraid, is actually in town; his vessel lies at Rotherhithe —your brother is absent from Harlowe Place; indeed not with Singleton yet, as I can hear. If you are *known* to be mine, or if you are but *thought* to be so, there will probably be an end of your brother's contrivances. The widow's

character may be as worthy *as it is said to be.* But the worthier she is, the more danger, if your brother's agent should find us out; since she may be persuaded that she ought in conscience to take a parent's part against a child who stands in opposition to them. But if she believes us married, her good character will stand us instead, and she will be of our party.—Then I have taken care to give her a reason why two apartments are requisite for us at the hour of retirement.

I perfectly raved at him. I would have flung from him in resentment; but he would not let me: and what could I do? Whither go, the evening advanced?

I am astonished at you! said I.—If you are a man of honour, what need of all this strange obliquity? You delight in crooked ways—let me know, since I *must* stay in your company (for he held my hand), let me know all you have said to the people below.—Indeed, indeed, Mr. Lovelace, you are a very unaccountable man.

My dearest creature, need I to have mentioned anything of this? and could I not have taken up my lodgings in this house unknown to you, if I had not intended to make you the judge of all my proceedings?—But *this* is what I have told the widow before her kinswomen, and before your new servant—'That indeed we were privately married at Hert-'ford; but that you had preliminary bound me under a 'solemn vow, which I am most religiously resolved to keep, 'to be contented with separate apartments, and even not to 'lodge under the same roof, till a certain reconciliation 'shall take place, which is of high consequence to both.' And further that I might convince you of the purity of my intentions, and that my whole view in this was to prevent mischief, I have acquainted them, 'that I have solemnly 'promised to behave to you before everybody, as if we 'were only betrothed, and not married; not even offering 'to take any of those innocent freedoms which are not 'refused in the most punctilious loves.'

And then he solemnly vowed to me the strictest observance of the same respectful behaviour to me.

I said, that I was not by any means satisfied with the tale he had told, nor with the necessity he wanted to lay me under of appearing what I was not: that every step he took was a wry one, a needless wry one: and since he thought it necessary to tell the people below anything about me, I insisted that he should unsay all he had said, and tell them the truth.

What he had told them, he said, was with so many circumstances, that he could sooner die than contradict it. And still he insisted upon the propriety of appearing to be married, for the reasons he had given before.—And, dearest creature, said he, why this high displeasure with me upon so well-intended an expedient? You know that I cannot wish to shun your brother, or his Singleton, but upon your account. The first step I would take, if left to myself, would be to find them out. *I have always acted in this manner, when anybody has presumed to give out threatenings against it.*

'Tis true I would have consulted you first, and had your leave. But since you dislike what I have said, let me implore you, dearest Madam, to give the only proper sanction to it, by naming an early day. Would to Heaven that were to be to-morrow!—For God's sake, let it be to-morrow! But, if not [was it his business, my dear, before I spoke (yet he seemed to be afraid of me) to say, *if not?*], let me beseech you, Madam, if my behaviour shall not be to your dislike, that you will not to-morrow, at breakfast-time, discredit what I have told them. The moment I give you cause to think that I take any advantage of your concession, that moment revoke it, and expose me, as I shall deserve.—And once more, let me remind you, that I have no view either to serve or save myself by this expedient. It is only to prevent a probable mischief, for your own mind's sake; and for the sake of those who deserve not the least consideration from me.

What could I say? What could I do?—I verily think, that had he urged me again, in a *proper manner*, I should have consented (little satisfied as I am with him) to give

him a meeting to-morrow morning at a more solemn place than in the parlour below.

But this I resolve, that he shall not have my consent to stay a night under this roof. He has now given me a stronger reason for this determination than I had before.

ALAS! my dear, how vain a thing to say, what we will, or what we will not do, when we have put ourselves into the power of this sex!—He went down to the people below, on my desiring to be left to myself; and stayed till their supper was just ready; and then, desiring a moment's *audience*, as he called it, he besought my leave to stay that one night, promising to set out either for Lord M.'s or for Edgware, to his friend Belford's, in the morning, after breakfast. But if I were against it, he said, he would not stay supper; and would attend me about eight next day —yet he added that my denial would have a very particular appearance to the people below, from what he had told them; and the more, as he had actually agreed for all the vacant apartments (indeed only for a month), for the reason he before hinted at: but I need not stay here two days, if, upon conversing with the widow and her nieces in the morning, I should have any dislike to them.

I thought, notwithstanding my resolution above mentioned, that it would seem too punctilious to deny him, under the circumstances he had mentioned: having, besides, no reason to think he would obey me; for he looked as if he were determined to debate the matter with me. And now, as I see no likelihood of a reconciliation with my friends, and as I have actually received his addresses, I thought I would not quarrel with him, if I could help it, especially as he asked to stay but for one night, and could have done so without my knowing it; and you being of opinion, that the proud wretch, distrusting his own merits with me, or at least my regard for him, will probably bring me to some concessions in his favour—for all these reasons, I thought proper to yield *this* point: yet I was so vexed with him on the *other*, that it was impossible for me to comply with that

grace which a concession should be made with, or not made at all.

This was what I said—What you *will* do, you *must* do, I think. You are very ready to promise; very ready to depart from your promise. You say, however, that you will set out to-morrow for the country. You know how ill I have been. I am not well enough now to debate with you upon your encroaching ways. I am utterly dissatisfied with the tale you have told below. Nor will I promise to appear to the people of the house to-morrow what I am not.

He withdrew in the most respectful manner, beseeching me only to favour him with such a meeting in the morning as might not make the widow and her nieces think he had given me reason to be offended with him.

I retired to my own apartment, and Dorcas came to me soon after to take my commands. I told her, that I required very little attendance, and always dressed and undressed myself.

She seemed concerned, as if she thought I had repulsed her; and said, it should be her whole study to oblige me.

I told her, that I was not difficult to be pleased: and should let her know from time to time what assistance I should expect from her. But for that night I had no occasion for her further attendance.

She is not only genteel, but is well bred, and well spoken —she must have had what is generally thought to be the polite part of education: but it is strange, that fathers and mothers should make so light, as they generally do, of that preferable part, in girls, which would improve their minds, and give a grace to all the rest.

As soon as she was gone, I inspected the doors, the windows, the wainscot, the dark closet as well as the light one; and finding very good fastenings to the door, and to all the windows, I again had recourse to my pen.

MRS. SINCLAIR is just now gone from me. Dorcas, she told me, had acquainted her that I had dismissed her for the

night. She came to ask me how I liked my apartment, and to wish me good rest. She expressed her concern, that they could not have my company at supper. Mr. Lovelace, she said, had informed them of my love of retirement. She assured me, that I should not be broken in upon. She highly extolled *him,* and gave *me* a share in the praise as to person. But was sorry, she said, that she was likely to lose us so soon as Mr. Lovelace talked of.

I answered her with suitable civility; and she withdrew with great tokens of respect. With greater, I think, than should be from distance of years, as she was the wife of a gentleman; and as the appearance of everything about her, as well house as dress, carries the marks of such good circumstances, as require not abasement.

If, my dear, you *will* write, against prohibition, be pleased to direct, *To Miss Lætitia Beaumont; to be left till called for, at Mr. Wilson's in Pall Mall.*

Mr. Lovelace proposed this direction to me, not *knowing* of your desire that your letters should pass by a third hand. As his motive for it was, that my brother might not trace out where we are, I am glad, as well from this instance as from others, that he seems to think he has done mischief enough already.

Do you know how my poor Hannah does?

Mr. Lovelace is so full of his contrivances and expedients, that I think it may not be amiss to desire you to look carefully to the seals of my letters, as I shall to those of yours. If I find him base in this particular, I shall think him capable of any evil; and will fly him as my worst enemy.

LETTER LXXIX.

Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

[With her two last Letters, No. LXXIII. and LXXIV. encl

Thursday Night,

I HAVE yours; just brought me. Mr. Hick helped me to a lucky expedient, which, with the a of the post, will enable me to correspond with you e An honest higler [Simon Collins his name], by who send this, and the two enclosed (now I have your whither), goes to town constantly on Mondays, We and Fridays; and can bring back to me from Mr. what you shall have caused to be left for me.

I congratulate you on your arrival in town, amended in spirits. I must be brief.—I hope yo no cause to repent returning my Norris. It is fort on demand.

I am sorry your Hannah can't be with you. Sh ill still; but not dangerously.

I long for your account of the women you are they are not right people, you will find them out breakfasting.

I know not what to write upon his reporting that you are actually married. His reasons for it sible. But he delights in odd expedients and inven

Whether you like the people or not, do not, noble sincerity and plain dealing, make yourself You are in the *world* now you know.

I am glad you had thoughts of taking him at if he had re-urged it. I wonder he did not. But not soon, and in such a way as you *can* accept of think of staying with him.

Depend upon it, my dear, he will not leave yo night or day, if he can help it, now he has got foot

I should have abhorred him for his report of y riage, had he not made it with such circumstance

it still in your power to keep him at distance. If once he offer at the *least* familiarity—but this is needless to say to you. He can have, I think, no other design but what he professes; because he must needs think, that his report of being married to you must increase your vigilance.

You may depend upon my looking narrowly into the sealings of your letters. If, as you say, he be base in that point, he will be so in everything. But to a person of your merit, of your fortune, of your virtue, he cannot be base. The man is no fool. It is his interest, as well with regard to his expectations from his own friends, as from you to be honest. Would to Heaven, however, you were *really* married! This is now the predominant wish of

Your

ANNA HOWE.

—o—

LETTER LXXX.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Thursday Morning, eight o'clock.

I AM more and more displeased with Mr. Lovelace, on reflection, for his boldness in hoping to make me, though but *passively*, as I may say, testify to his great untruth. And I shall like him still less for it, if his view in it does not come out to be *the hope of accelerating my resolution in his favour*, by the difficulty it will lay me under as to my behaviour to him. He has sent me his compliments by Dorcas, with a request that I will permit him to attend me in the dining-room,—perhaps, that he may guess from thence, whether I will meet him in good humour, or not: but I have answered, that as I shall see him at breakfast-time I desired to be excused.

—o—

Ten o'clock.

I TRIED to adjust my countenance, before I went down, to an easier air than I had a heart, and was received with

the highest tokens of respect by the widow and her two nieces: agreeable young women enough in their persons; but they seemed to put on an air of reserve; while Mr. Lovelace was easy and free to all, as if he were of long acquaintance with them: gracefully enough, I cannot but say; an advantage which travelled gentlemen have over other people.

The widow, in the conversation we had after breakfast, gave us an account of the military merit of the Colonel her husband, and upon this occasion, put her handkerchief to her eyes twice or thrice. I hope for the sake of her sincerity, she wetted it, because she would be thought to have done so; but I saw not that she did. She wished that I might never know the loss of a husband so dear to me, as her beloved Colonel was to her: and she again put the handkerchief to her eyes.

It must, no doubt, be a most affecting thing to be separated from a good husband, and to be left in difficult circumstances besides, and that not by *his* fault, and exposed to the insults of the base and ungrateful, as she represented her case to be at his death. This moved me a good deal in her favour.

You know, my dear, that I have an open and free heart; and naturally have as open and free a countenance; at least my complimenters have told me so. At once, where I like, I mingle minds without reserve, encouraging reciprocal freedoms, and am forward to dissipate diffidences. But with these two nieces of the widow I never can be intimate —I don't know why.

Only that circumstances, and what passed in conversation, encouraged not the notion, or I should have been apt to think, that the young ladies and Mr. Lovelace were of longer acquaintance than of yesterday. For he, by stealth as it were, cast glances sometimes at them, which they returned; and on my ocular notice, their eyes fell, as I may say, under my eye, as if they could not stand its examination.

The widow directed all her talk to me, as to Mrs. Lovelace; and I, with a very ill grace, bore it. And once she

expressed more forwardly than I thanked her for, her wonder that any vow, any consideration, however weighty, could have force enough with so charming a couple, as she called him and me, to make us keep separate beds.

Their eyes, upon this hint, had the advantage of mine. Yet was I not conscious of guilt. How know I then, upon recollection, that my censures upon theirs are not too rash? There are, no doubt, many truly modest persons (putting myself out of the question) who, by blushes at an injurious charge, have been suspected, by those who cannot distinguish between the confusion which guilt will be attended with, and the noble consciousness that overspreads the face of a fine spirit, to be thought but capable of an imputed evil.

The great Roman, as we read, who took his surname from one part in three (the fourth not then discovered) of the world he had triumphed over, being charged with a mean crime to his soldiery, chose rather to suffer exile (the punishment due to it, had he been found guilty) than to have it said, that Scipio was questioned in public, on so scandalous a charge. And think you, my dear, that Scipio did not blush with indignation, when the charge was first communicated to him?

Mr. Lovelace, when the widow expressed her forward wonder, looked sly and leering, as if to observe how I took it: and said, they might take notice that his regard for my will and pleasure (calling me his dear creature) had greater force upon him than the oath by which he had bound himself.

Rebuking both him and the widow, I said, it was strange to me to hear an oath or vow so lightly treated, as to have it thought but of second consideration, whatever were the first.

The observation was just, Miss Martin said; for that nothing could excuse the breaking of a solemn vow, be the occasion of making it what it would.

I asked her after the nearest church; for I have been too long a stranger to the sacred worship. They named St. James's, St. Anne's, and another in Bloomsbury; and the

two nieces said they oftenest went to St. James's church, because of the good company, as well as for the excellent preaching.

Mr. Lovelace said, the Royal Chapel was the place he oftenest went to, when in town. Poor man! little did I expect to hear he went to any place of devotion. I asked, if the presence of the visible king of comparatively but a small territory, did not take off, too generally, the requisite attention to the service of the invisible King and Maker of a thousand worlds?

He believed this might be so with such as came for curiosity, when the royal family were present. But otherwise, he had seen as many contrite faces at the Royal Chapel, as anywhere else: and why not? Since the people about court have as deep scores to wipe off, as any people whatsoever.

He spoke this with so much levity, that I could not help saying, that nobody questioned but he knew how to choose his company.

Your servant, my dear, bowing, were his words; and turning to them, you will observe upon numberless occasions, ladies, as we are further acquainted, that my beloved never spares me upon these topics. But I admire her as much in her reproofs, as I am fond of her approbation.

Miss Horton said, there was a time for everything. She could not but say, that she thought innocent mirth was mighty becoming in young people.

Very true, joined in Miss Martin. And Shakspeare says well, *that youth is the spring of life, the bloom of gaudy years* [with a theatrical air, she spoke it]: and for her part, she could not but admire in my spouse that charming vivacity which so well suited his time of life.

Mr. Lovelace bowed. The man is fond of praise. More fond of it, I doubt, than of deserving it. Yet this sort of praise he *does* deserve. He has, you know, an easy free manner, and no bad voice: and this praise so expanded his gay heart, that he sung the following lines from Congreve, as he told us they were:

Youth does a thousand pleasures bring,
Which from decrepid age will fly;
Sweets that wanton in the bosom of the spring,
In winter's cold embraces die.

And this for a compliment, as he said, to the two nieces. Nor was it thrown away upon them. They encored it; and his compliance fixed them in my memory.

We had some talk about meals, and the widow very civilly offered to conform to any rules I would set her. I told her how easily I was pleased, and how much I chose to dine by myself, and that from a plate sent me from any single dish. But I will not trouble you, my dear, with such particulars.

They thought me very singular; and with reason: but as I liked them not so *very* well as to forego my own choice in compliment to them, I was the less concerned for what they thought.—And still the less, as Mr. Lovelace had put me very much out of humour with him.

They, however, cautioned me against melancholy. I said, I should be a very unhappy creature if I could not bear my own company.

Mr. Lovelace said, that he must let the ladies into my story, and then they would know how to allow for my ways. But, *my dear, as you love me,* said the confident wretch, give as little way to melancholy as possible. Nothing but the sweetness of your temper, and your high notions of a duty that never can be deserved where you place it, can make you so uneasy as you are.—Be not angry, *my dear love,* for saying so [seeing me frown, I suppose]: and snatched my hand and kissed it.—I left him with them; and retired to my closet and my pen.

Just as I have written thus far, I am interrupted by a message from him, that he is setting out on a journey, and desires to take my commands.—So here I will leave off, to give him a meeting in the dining-room.

I was not displeased to see him in his riding-dress.

He seemed desirous to know how I liked the gentlewomen

below. I told him, that although I did not think them *very* exceptionable; yet as I wanted not, in my present situation, new acquaintance, I should not be fond of cultivating theirs.

He urged me still further on this head.

I could not say, I told him, that I greatly liked either of the young gentlewomen, any more than their aunt: and that, were my situation ever so happy, they had much too gay a turn for me.

He did not wonder, he said, to hear me say so. He knew not any of the sex, who had been accustomed to show themselves at the town diversions and amusements, that would appear tolerable to me. *Silences* and *blushes*, Madam, are now no graces with our fine ladies in town. Hardened by frequent public appearances, they would be as much ashamed to be found guilty of these weaknesses as men.

Do you defend these two gentlewomen, sir, by reflections upon half the sex? But you must second me, Mr. Lovelace (and yet I am not fond of being thought particular), in my desire of breakfasting and supping (when I *do* sup) by myself.

If I would have it so, to be sure it should be so. The people of the house were not of consequence enough to be apologised to, in any point where my pleasure was concerned. And if I should dislike them still more on further knowledge of them, he hoped I would think of *some other lodgings*.

He expressed a good deal of regret at leaving me, declaring that it was absolutely in obedience to my commands: but that he could not have consented to go, while my brother's schemes were on foot, if I had not done him the credit of my countenance in the report he had made that we were married; which, he said, had bound all the family to his interest, so that he could leave me with the greater security and satisfaction.

He hoped, he said, that on his *return* I would name his happy day; and the rather, as I might be convinced by my brother's projects, that no reconciliation was to be expected.

I told him, that perhaps I might write one letter to my uncle Harlowe. He once loved me. I should be easier

when I had made one direct application. I might possibly propose such terms, in relation to my grandfather's estate, as might procure me their attention; and I hoped he would be long enough absent to give me time to write to him, and receive an answer from him.

That, he must beg my pardon, he could not promise. He would inform himself of Singleton's and my brother's motions; and if on his return he found no reason for apprehension, he would go directly for Berks, and endeavour to bring up with him his cousin Charlotte, who, he hoped, would induce me to give him an earlier day than at present I *seemed to think of.*—I *seemed to think of,* my dear, very acquiescent, as I should imagine!

I told him, that I should take that young lady's company for a great favour.

I was the more pleased with this motion, as it came from himself, and with no ill grace.

He earnestly pressed me to accept of a bank note: but I declined it. And then he offered me his servant William for my attendant in his absence; who, he said, might be despatched to him, if anything extraordinary fell out. I consented to that.

He took his leave of me in the most respectful manner, only kissing my hand. He left the bank note unobserved by me, upon the table. You may be sure, I shall give it him back at his return.

I am in a much better humour with him than I was.

Where doubts of any person are removed, a mind not ungenerous is willing, by way of amends for having conceived those doubts, to construe everything that happens, *capable* of a good instruction, in that person's favour. Particularly, I cannot but be pleased to observe, that although he speaks of the ladies of his family with the freedom of relationship, yet it is always of tenderness. And from a man's kindness to his relations of the sex, a woman has some reason to expect his good behaviour to herself, when married, if she be willing to deserve it from him.

And thus, my dear, am I brought to sit down satisfied

with this man, where I find room to infer that he is not by nature a savage. But how could a creature who (treating herself unpolitely) gave a man an opportunity to run away with her, expect to be treated by that man with a very high degree of politeness?

But why, now, when fairer prospects seem to open, why these melancholy reflections? will my beloved friend ask of her Clarissa.

Why? Can you ask why, my dearest Miss Howe, of a creature, who, in the world's eye, has enrolled her name among the giddy and the inconsiderate; who labours under a parent's curse, and the cruel uncertainties which must arise from reflecting, that, equally against duty and principle, she has thrown herself into the power of a man, and that man an immoral one?—Must not the sense she has of her inconsideration darken her most hopeful prospects? Must it not even rise *strongest* upon a thoughtful mind, when her hopes are the fairest? Even her pleasures, were the man to prove better than she expects, coming to her with an abatement, like that which persons who are in possession of ill-gotten wealth, must then most poignantly experience (if they have reflecting and unseared minds), when, all their wishes answered (if the wishes of such persons can ever be wholly answered), they sit down in hopes to *enjoy* what they have unjustly obtained, and find their own reflections their greatest torment.

May you, my dear friend, be always happy in your reflections, prays

Your ever affectionate

CL. HARLOWE.

[Mr. Lovelace, in his next letter, triumphs on his having carried his two great points of making the lady yield to pass for his wife to the people of the house, and to his taking up his lodging in it, though but for one night. He is now, he says, in a fair way, and doubts not but that he shall soon prevail, if not by persuasion, by surprise. *Yet he pretends to have some little remorse,* and

censures himself as acting the part of the grand tempter. But having succeeded thus far, he cannot, he says, forbear trying, according to the resolution he had before made, whether he cannot go farther.

He gives the particulars of their debates on the above mentioned subjects, to the same effect as in the lady's last letters.

It will by this time be seen that his whole merit, with regard to this lady, lies in doing justice to her excellences both of mind and person, though to his own condemnation. Thus he begins his succeeding letter:]

And now, Belford, will I give thee an account of our first breakfast-conversation.

All sweetly serene and easy was the lovely brow and charming aspect of my goddess, on her descending among us; commanding reverence from every eye, a courtesy from every knee, and silence, awful silence, from every quivering lip: while she, armed with conscious worthiness and superiority, looked and behaved as an empress would look and behave among her vassals; yet with a freedom from pride and haughtiness, as if born to dignity, and to a behaviour habitually gracious.

[He takes notice of the jealousy, pride, and vanity of Sally Martin and Polly Horton, on his respectful behaviour to the lady: creatures who, brought up too high for their fortunes, and to a taste of pleasure, and the public diversions, had fallen an easy prey to his seducing arts (as will be seen in the conclusion of this work): and who, as he observes, 'had not yet got over that distinction in their 'love, which makes a woman prefer one man to another.']

How difficult is it, says he, to make a woman subscribe to a preference against herself, though ever so visible; especially where love is concerned! This violent, this partial little devil, Sally, has the insolence to compare herself with my angel—yet owns her to be an angel. I charge you, Mr. Lovelace, says she, show none of your extravagant acts of kindness before me to this sullen, this gloomy beauty

—I cannot bear it. Then was I reminded of her first sacrifice.

What a rout do these women make about nothing at all! Were it not for what the *learned Bishop*, in his letter from Italy, calls the entanglements of amour, and *I* the delicacies of intrigue, what is there, Belford, in all they can do for us?

How do these creatures endeavour to stimulate me! A fallen woman is a worse devil than even a profligate man. The former is incapable of remorse: that am not I—nor ever shall they prevail upon me, though aided by all the powers of darkness, to treat this admirable creature with indignity—so far, I mean, as indignity can be separated from the trials which will prove her to be either woman or angel.

Yet with them I am a craven. I might have had her before now if I would. If I would treat her as flesh and blood, I should find her such. They thought I knew, if any man living did, that if a man made a goddess of a woman, she would assume the goddess; that if power were given her, she would exert that power to the giver, if to nobody else. And D——r's wife is thrown into my dish, who, thou knowest, kept her ceremonious husband at haughty distance, and whined in private to her insulting footman. Oh, how I cursed the blaspheming wretches! They will make me, as I tell them, hate their house, and remove from it. And by my soul, Jack, I am ready at times to think that I should not have brought her hither, were it but on Sally's account. And yet, without knowing either Sally's heart or Polly's, the dear creature resolves against having any conversation with them but such as she cannot avoid. I am not sorry for this, thou mayest think; since jealousy in woman is not to be concealed from woman. And Sally has no command of herself.

What dost think!—Here this little devil Sally, not being able, as she told me, to support life under my displeasure, was going into a fit: but when I saw her *preparing* for it, I went out of the room; and so she thought it would not be worth her while to show away.

[In this manner he mentions what his meaning was in making the lady the compliment of his absence:]

As to leaving her: if I go but for *one* night, I have fulfilled my promise: and if she think not, I can mutter and grumble, and yield again, and make a merit of it; and then, unable to live out of her presence, soon return. Nor are women ever angry at bottom for being disobeyed through excess of love. They like an uncontrollable passion. They like to have every favour ravished from them, and to be eaten and drunk quite up by a voracious lover. Don't I know the sex?—Not so, indeed, as yet, my Clarissa: but, however, with *her* my frequent egresses will make me look new to her, and create little busy scenes between us. At the least, I may surely, without exception, salute her at parting, and at return; and will not those occasional freedoms (which civility will warrant) by degrees familiarise my charmer to them?

But here, Jack, what shall I do with my uncle and aunts, and all my loving cousins? For I understand that they are more in haste to have me married than I am myself.

LETTER LXXXI.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Friday, April 28.

MR. LOVELACE is returned already. My brother's projects were his pretence. I could not but look upon this short absence as an evasion of his promise; especially as he had taken such precautions with the people below; and as he knew that I proposed to keep close within-doors. I cannot bear to be dealt meanly with; and angrily insisted that he should directly set out for Berkshire, in order to engage his cousin, as he had promised.

Oh, my dearest life, said he, why will you banish me from your presence? I cannot leave you for so long a time as

you seem to expect I should. I have been hovering about town ever since I left you. Edgware was the farthest place I went to, and there I was not able to stay two hours, for fear, at this crisis, anything should happen. Who can account for the workings of an apprehensive mind, when all that is dear and valuable to it is at stake? You may spare yourself the trouble of writing to any of your friends, till the solemnity has passed that shall entitle me to give weight to your application. When they know we are married, your brother's plots will be at an end; and your father and mother, and uncles, must be reconciled to you. Why then should you hesitate a moment to confirm my happiness? Why, once more, would you banish me from you? Why will you not give the man who has brought you into difficulties, and who so honourably wishes to extricate you from them, the happiness of doing so?

He was silent. My voice failed to second the inclination. I had to say something not wholly discouraging to a point so warmly pressed.

I'll tell you, my angel, resumed he, what I propose to do, if you approve of it. I will instantly go out to view some of the handsome new squares or fine streets round them, and make a report to you of any suitable house I find to be let. I will take such a one as you shall choose, and set up an equipage befitting our condition. You shall direct the whole. And on some early day, either before, or after we fix [*it must be at your own choice*], be pleased to make me the happiest of men. And then will everything be in a desirable train. You shall receive in your own house (if it can be so soon furnished as I wish) the compliments of all my relations. Charlotte shall visit you in the interim: and if it take up time, you shall choose whom you will honour with your company, first, second, or third, in the summer months; and on your return you shall find all that was wanting in your new habitation supplied, and pleasures in a constant round shall attend us. Oh, my angel, take me to you, instead of banishing me from you, and make me yours for ever.

You see, my dear, that here was no *day* pressed for, I was not uneasy about that, and the sooner recovered myself, as there was not. But, however, I gave him no reason to upbraid me for refusing his offer of going in search of a house.

He is accordingly gone out for this purpose. But I find that he intends to take up his lodging here to-night; and if to-night, no doubt on other nights, while he is in town. As the doors and windows of my apartment have good fastenings; as he has not, in all this time, given me cause for apprehension; as he has the pretence of my brother's schemes to plead; as the people below are very courteous and obliging, Miss Horton especially, who seems to have taken a great liking to me, and to be of a gentler temper and manners than Miss Martin; and as we are now in a tolerable way; I imagine it would look particular to them all and bring me into a debate with a man, who (let him be set upon what he will) has always a great deal to say for himself, if I were to insist upon his promise: on all these accounts, I think, I will take no notice of his lodging here, if he don't.—Let me know, my dear, your thoughts of everything.

You may believe I gave him back his bank-note the moment I saw him.

—o—

Friday Evening.

MR. LOVELACE has seen two or three houses, but none to his mind. But he has heard of one which looks promising, he says, and which he is to inquire about in the morning.

—o—

Saturday Morning.

HE has made his inquiries, and actually seen the house he was told of last night. The owner of it is a young widow lady, who is inconsolable for the death of her husband; *Fretchville* her name. It is furnished quite in taste, everything being new within these six months. He believes, if I like not the furniture, the use of it may be agreed for, with the

house, for a time certain: but, if I like it, he will endeavour to take the one, and purchase the other, directly.

The lady sees nobody; nor are the best apartments above stairs to be viewed, till she is either absent, or gone into the country; which she talks of doing in a fortnight, or three weeks, at farthest, and to live there retired.

What Mr. Lovelace saw of the house (which were the saloon and two parlours) was perfectly elegant; and he was assured, all is [of a piece. The offices are also very convenient; coach-house and stables at hand.

He shall be very impatient, he says, till I see the whole; nor will he, if he finds he can have it, look farther till I have seen it, except anything else offer to my liking. The price he values not.

He now does nothing but talk of the *ceremony*, but not indeed of the *day*. I don't want him to urge that—but I wonder he does not.

He has just now received a letter from Lady Betty Lawrance, by a particular hand; the contents principally relating to an affair she has in chancery. But in the postscript she is pleased to say very respectful things of me.

They are all impatient, she says, for the happy day being over; which they flatter themselves will *ensure his reformation*.

He hoped, he told me, that I would *soon* enable him to answer *their* wishes and *his own*.

But, my dear, although the opportunity was so inviting, he urged not for the day. Which is the *more extraordinary*, as he was so pressing for marriage before we came to town.

He was very earnest with me to give him, and four of his friends, my company on Monday evening, at a little collation. Miss Martin and Miss Horton cannot, he says, be there, being engaged in a party of their own, with two daughters of Colonel Solcombe, and two nieces of Sir Antony Holmes, upon an annual occasion. But Mrs. Sinclair will be present, and she gave him hope of the company of a young lady of very great fortune and merit (Miss *Partington*), an heiress to whom Colonel Sinclair, it seems,

in his lifetime was guardian, and who therefore calls Mrs. Sinclair mamma.

I desired to be excused. He has laid me, I said, under a most disagreeable necessity of appearing as a married person, and I would see as few people as possible who were to think me so.

He would not urge it, he said, if I were *much* averse: but they were his select friends; men of birth and fortune, who longed to see me. It was true, he added, that they, as well as his friend Doleman, believed we were married: but they thought him under the restrictions that he had mentioned to the people below. I might be assured, he told me, that his politeness before them should be carried into the highest degree of reverence.

When he is set upon anything, there is no knowing, as I have said heretofore, what one *can* do.* But I will not, if I can help it, be made a show of; especially to men of whose characters and principles I have no good opinion. I am, my dearest friend,

Your ever affectionate

Cl. Harlowe.

[Mr. Lovelace, in his next letter, gives an account of his quick return: of his reasons to the lady for it: of her displeasure upon it: and of her urging his absence from the safety she was in from the situation of the house, except she were to be traced out by his visits.]

I was confoundedly puzzled, says he, on this occasion, and on her insisting upon the execution of a too-ready offer which I made her to go down to Berks, to bring up my cousin Charlotte to visit and attend her. I made miserable excuses; and fearing that they would be mortally resented, as her passion began to rise upon my saying Charlotte was delicate, which she took strangely wrong, I was obliged to screen myself behind the most solemn and explicit declarations.

† See Letter LXXVIII. of this volume. See also vol. i. Letter LXIV.

[He then repeats those declarations, to the same effect with the account she gives of them.]

I began, says he, with an intention to keep my life of honour in view, in the declarations I made her; but as it has been said of a certain orator in the House of Commons, who more than once, in a long speech, convinced himself as he went along, and concluded against the side he set out intending to favour, so I in earnest pressed without reserve for matrimony in the progress of my harangue, which state I little thought of urging upon her with so much strength and explicitness.

[He then values himself upon the delay that his proposal of taking and furnishing a house must occasion.

He wavers in his resolutions whether to act honourable or not by a merit so exalted.

He values himself upon his own delicacy, in expressing his indignation against her friends, for supposing what he pretends his heart rises against them for presuming to suppose.]

But have I not reason, says he, to be angry with her for not praising me for this my delicacy, when she is so ready to call me to account for the least failure in punctilio?—However, I believe I can excuse her too, upon this generous consideration [for *generous* I am sure it is, because it is against myself], that her mind being the essence of delicacy, the least want of it shocks her; while the meeting with what is so very extraordinary to *me*, is too familiar to her to obtain her notice, *as* an extraordinary.

[He glories in the story of the house, and of the young widow possessor of it, Mrs. Fretchville he calls her; and leaves it doubtful to Mr. Belford, whether it be a real or a fictitious story.

He mentions his different proposals in relation to the ceremony, which he so earnestly pressed for; and owns his artful intention in avoiding to name the day.]

And now, says he, I hope soon to have an opportunity to begin my operations; since all is *halcyon* and security.

It is impossible to describe the dear creature's sweet and silent confusion, when I touched upon the matrimonial topics.

She *may* doubt. She *may* fear. The wise in all important cases will doubt, and will fear, till they are sure. But her apparent willingness to think well of a spirit so inventive, and so machinating, is a happy prognostic for me. Oh, these reasoning ladies!—How I love these reasoning ladies!—'Tis all over with them, when once love has crept into their hearts: for then will they employ all their reasoning powers to excuse rather than to *blame* the conduct of the *doubted* lover, let appearances against him be ever so strong.

Mowbray, Belton, and Tourville long to see my angel, and will be there. She has *refused* me; but *must be present* notwithstanding. So generous a spirit as mine is cannot enjoy its happiness without communication. If I raise not your envy and admiration both at once, but half-joy will be the joy of having such a charming fly entangled in my web. She therefore must comply. And thou must come. And then will show thee the pride and glory of the Harlowe family, my implacable enemies; and thou shalt join with me in my triumph over them all.

I know not what may still be the perverse beauty's fate: I want thee, therefore, to see and admire her, while she is serene and full of hope: before her apprehensions are realised, if realised they are to be; and if evil apprehensions of me she really has; before her beamy eyes have lost their lustre; while yet her charming face is surrounded with all its virgin glories; and before the plough of disappointment has thrown up furrows of distress upon every lovely feature.

If I can procure you this honour you will be ready to laugh out, as I have often much ado to forbear, at the puritanical behaviour of the mother before this lady. Not an oath, not a curse, nor the least free word, escapes her lips. She minces in her gait. She prims up her horse-mouth. Her voice, which, when she pleases, is the voice

of thunder, is sunk into an humble whine. Her stiff hams, that have not been bent to a civility for ten years past, are now limbered into courtesies three deep at every word. Her fat arms are crossed before her; and she can hardly be prevailed upon to sit in the presence of my goddess.

I am drawing up instructions for ye all to observe on Monday night.

—o—

Saturday Night.

Most confoundedly alarmed!—Lord, sir, what do you think? cried Dorcas—my lady is resolved to go to church to-morrow! I was at quadrille with the women below.—To church! said I, and down I laid my cards. *To church!* repeated they, each looking upon the other. We had done playing for *that* night.

Who could have dreamt of such a whim as this?—Without notice, without questions! Her clothes not come! No leave asked!—Impossible she should think of being *my wife!*—Besides, she don't consider, if she go to church, I must go too!—Yet not to ask for my company! Her brother and Singleton ready to snap her up, as far as she knows?—Known by her clothes—her person, her features, so distinguished!—Not such another woman in England!—To church of all places! Is the devil in the girl! said I, as soon as I could speak.

Well, but to leave this subject till to-morrow morning, I will now give you the instructions I have drawn up for your and your companions' behaviour on Monday night.

Instructions to be observed by John Belford, Richard Mowbray, Thomas Belton, and James Tourville, Esquires of the Body to General Robert Lovelace, on their admission to the presence of his Goddess.

Ye must be sure to let it seek deep into your heavy heads, that there is no such lady in the world as Miss Clarissa Harlowe; and that she is neither more nor less than Mrs.

Lovelace, though at present, to my shame be it spoken, a virgin.

Be mindful also, that your old mother's name, after that of *her* mother when a maid, is Sinclair: that her husband was a lieutenant-colonel, and all that *you*, Belford, know from honest Doleman's letter of her,* that let your brethren know.

Mowbray and Tourville, the two greatest blunderers of the four, I allow to be acquainted with the widow and nieces, from the knowledge they had of the colonel. They will not forbear familiarities of speech to the mother, as of longer acquaintance than a day. So I have suited their parts to their capacities.

They may praise the widow and the colonel for people of great honour—but not too grossly; nor to labour the point, so as to render themselves suspected.

The mother will lead ye into her own and the colonel's praises; and Tourville and Mowbray may be both her vouchers—I, and you, and Belton, must be only hearsay confirmers.

As poverty is generally suspectible, the widow must be got handsomely aforehand; and no doubt but she is. The elegance of her house and furniture, and her readiness to discharge all demands upon her, which she does with ostentation enough, and which makes her neighbours, I suppose, like her the better, demonstrate this. She will propose to do handsome things by her two nieces. Sally is near marriage—with an eminent woollen-draper in the Strand, if ye have a mind to it; for there are five or six of them there.

The nieces may be inquired after, since they will be absent, as persons respected by Mowbray and Tourville, for their late worthy uncle's sake.

Watch ye diligently every turn of my countenance, every motion of my eye; for in my eye and in my countenance will ye find a sovereign regulator. I need not bid you respect me mightily: your allegiance obliges you to that: and who that sees me, respects me not?

* See Letter LIII. of this volume.

Priscilla Partington (for her looks so innocent, and discretion so deep, yet seeming so softly) may be greatly relied upon. She will accompany the mother, gorgeously dressed, with all her Jew's extravagance flaming out upon her; and first *induce*, then *countenance*, the lady. She has her cue, and I hope will make her acquaintance coveted by my charmer.

Miss Partington's history is this; the daughter of Colonel Sinclair's brother-in-law: that brother-in-law may have been a Turkey merchant, or any merchant, who died confoundedly rich: the colonel one of her guardians [*collateral credit in that to the old one*]: whence she always calls Mrs. Sinclair *mamma*, though not succeeding to the trust.

She is just come to pass a day or two, and then to return to her surviving guardian's at Barnet.

Miss Partington has suitors a little hundred (her grandmother, an alderman's dowager, having left her a great additional fortune), and is not trusted out of her guardian's house without an old governante, noted for discretion, except to her mamma Sinclair, with whom now and then she is permitted to be for a week together.

Pris. will mamma-up Mrs. Sinclair, and will undertake to court her guardian to let her pass a delightful week with her—Sir Edward Holden he may as well be, if your shallow pates will not be clogged with too many circumstantials. Lady Holden, perhaps, will come with her; for she always delighted in her mamma Sinclair's company, and talks of her, and her good management, twenty times a day.

Be it principally thy part, Jack, who art a parading fellow, and aimest at wisdom, to keep thy brother-varlets from blundering; for, as thou must have observed from what I have written, we have the most watchful and most penetrating lady in the world to deal with; a lady worth deceiving! but whose eyes will pierce to the bottom of your shallow souls the moment she hears you open. Do you therefore place thyself between Mowbray and Tourville: their toes to be played upon and commanded by thine, if they go wrong: thy elbows to be the ministers of approbation.

As to your general behaviour; no hypocrisy!—I hate it: so does my charmer. If I had studied for it, I believe I *could* have been a hypocrite: but my general character is so well known, that I should have been suspected at once, had I aimed at making myself too white. But what necessity can there be for hypocrisy, unless the generality of the sex were to *refuse* us for our immoralities? The best of them love to have the credit of reforming us. Let the sweet souls try for it: if they fail, their intent was good. That will be a consolation to them. And as to *us*, our work will be the easier; our sins the fewer: since they will draw themselves in with a very little of our help; and we shall save a parcel of cursed falsehoods, and appear to be what we *are* both to angels and men.—Meantime their very grandmothers will acquit us, and reproach them with their *self-do, self-have,* and as having *erred against knowledge,* and ventured against *manifest appearances.* What folly, therefore, for men of our character to be hypocrites!

Be sure to instruct the rest, and do thou thyself remember not to talk obscenely. You know I never permitted any of you to talk obscenely. Time enough for that, when ye grow old, and can ONLY talk. Besides, ye must consider Prisc.'s *affected* characted, my goddess's *real* one. Far from obscenity, therefore, do not so much as touch upon the double *entendre.* What! as I have often said, cannot you touch a lady's heart, without wounding her ear?

It is *necessary* that ye should appear worse men than myself. You cannot help appearing so, you'll say. Well, then, there will be the less restraint upon you—the less restraint, the less affectation.—And if Belton begins his favourite subject in behalf of *keeping,* it may make me take upon myself to oppose him: but fear not; I shall not give the argument all my force.

She must have some curiosity, I think, to see what sort of men my companions are: she will not expect any of you to be saints. Are you not men born to considerable fortunes, although ye are not all of you men of parts? Who is it in this mortal life that *wealth does not mislead?* And

as it gives people the *power of being mischievous*, does it not require great virtue to forbear the use of that power? Is not the devil said to be the god of this world? Are we not children of this world? Well, then! let me tell thee my opinion—It is this, that were it not for the *poor* and the *middling*, the world would probably, long ago, have been destroyed by fire from Heaven. Ungrateful wretches the rest, thou wilt be apt to say, to make such sorry returns, as they generally do make, to the poor and the *middling!*

This dear lady is prodigiously learned in *theories*. But as to *practices*, as to *experimentals*, must be, as you know from her tender years, a mere novice. Till she knew me, I daresay, she did not believe, whatever she had read, that there were such fellows in the world, as she will see in you four. I shall have much pleasure in observing how she'll stare at her company, when she finds me the politest man of the five.

And so much for instructions general and particular for your behaviour on Monday night.

And let me add, that you must attend to every minute circumstance, whether you think there be reason in it, or not. Deep, like golden ore, frequently lies my meaning, and richly worth digging for. The hint of *least* moment, as *you* may imagine it, is often pregnant with events of the *greatest*. Be implicit. Am not I your general? Did I ever lead you on that I brought you not off with safety and success?—Sometimes to your own stupid astonishment.

And now, methinks thou art curious to know, what can be my view in risking the displeasure of my fair one, and alarming her fears, after four or five halcyon days have gone over our heads? I'll satisfy thee.

The visitors of the two nieces will crowd the house.—Beds will be scarce:—Miss Partington, a sweet, modest, genteel girl, will be prodigiously taken with my charmer;—will want to begin a friendship with her—a share in her bed, for one night only will be requested. Who knows, but on that very Monday night I may be so unhappy as to give *mortal offence* to my beloved? *The shyest birds may be*

caught napping. Should she *attempt to fly me* upon it, cannot I *detain her?* Should she *actually fly,* cannot I *bring her back,* by authority civil or uncivil, if I have evidence upon evidence that she acknowledged, though but tacitly, her marriage? And *should I, or should I not* succeed, and she *forgive me,* or if she but descend to *expostulate,* or if she *bear me in her sight,* then will she be all my own. All delicacy is my charmer. I long to see how such a delicacy, on *any* of these occasions, will behave, and in my situation it behoves me to provide against every accident.

I must take care, knowing what an eel I have to do with, that the little riggling rogue does not slip through my fingers. How silly should I look, staring after her, when she had shot from me into the muddy river, her family, from which with so much difficulty I have taken her!

Well then, here are—let me see—how many persons are there who, after Monday night, will be able to swear that she has gone by my name, answered to my name, had no other view in leaving her friends but to go by my name? her own relations neither able nor willing to deny it.—First, here are *my* servants, her servant, Dorcas, Mrs. Sinclair, Mrs. Sinclair's two nieces, and Miss Partington.

But for fear these evidences should be suspected, here comes the jet of the business—'No less than four worthy 'gentlemen of fortune and family, who were all in company 'such a night particularly, at a collation to which they were 'invited by Robert Lovelace, of Sandoun Hall, in the county 'of Lancaster, esquire, in company with Magdalen Sinclair, 'widow, and Priscilla Partington, spinster, and the lady 'complainant, when the said Robert Lovelace addressed 'himself to the said lady, on a multitude of occasions, as '*his* wife; as they and others did, as Mrs. Lovelace; every 'one complimenting and congratulating her upon her 'nuptials; and that she received such their compliments 'and congratulations with no other visible displeasure or 'repugnance, than such as a young bride, full of blushes 'and pretty confusion, might be supposed to express upon 'such contemplative revolvings as those compliments would

'naturally inspire.' Nor do thou rave at me, Jack, nor *rebel*. Dost think I brought the dear creature hither for nothing?

And here's a faint sketch of my plot.—Stand by, varlets —tanta-ra-ra-ra!—Veil your bonnets, and confess your master!

—o—

LETTER LXXXII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Sunday.

HAVE been at church, Jack—behaved admirably well too! My charmer is pleased with me now: for I was exceedingly attentive to the discourse, and very ready in the auditor's part of the service.—Eyes did not much wander. How could they, when the loveliest object, infinitely the loveliest in the whole church, was in my view!

Dear creature! how fervent, how amiable, in her devotions! I have got her to own *that she prayed for me*. I hope a prayer from so excellent a mind will not be made in vain.

There is, after all, something beautifully solemn in devotion. The Sabbath is a charming institution to *keep* the heart right, when it *is* right. One day in seven, how reasonable!—I think I'll go to church once a day often. I fancy it will go a great way towards making me a reformed man. To see multitudes of well-appearing people all joining in one reverent act. An exercise how worthy of a rational being! Yet it adds a sting or two to my former stings, when I think of my projects with regard to this charming creature. In my conscience, I believe, if I were to go constantly to church, I could not pursue them.

I had a scheme come into my head while there; but I will renounce it, because it obtruded itself upon me in so good a place. Excellent creature! How many *ruins* has she prevented by attaching me to herself—by engrossing my whole attention!

But let me tell thee what passed between us in my first visit of this morning; and then I will acquaint thee more largely with my good behaviour at church.

I could not be admitted till after eight. I found her ready prepared to go out. I pretended to be ignorant of her intention, having charged Dorcas not to own that she had told me of it.

Going abroad, Madam?—with an air of indifference.

Yes, sir: I intend to go to church.

I hope, Madam, I shall have the honour to attend you.

No: she designed to take a chair, and go to the next church.

This startled me:—A chair to carry her to the next church from Mrs. Sinclair's, her right name not Sinclair, and to bring her back hither in the face of people who might not think well of the house!—There was no permitting that. Yet I was to appear indifferent. But said, I should take it for a favour, if she would permit me to attend her in a coach, as there was time for it, to St. Paul's.

She made objections to the gaiety of my dress; and told me, that if she went to St. Paul's, she could go in a coach without *me*.

I objected Singleton and her brother, and offered to dress in the plainest suit I had.

I beg the favour of attending you, dear Madam, said I. I have not been at church a great while; we shall sit in different stalls, and the next time I go, I hope it will be to give myself a title to the greatest blessing I can receive.

She made some further objections: but at last permitted me the honour of attending her.

I got myself placed in her eye, that the time might not seem tedious to me, for we were there early. And I gained her good opinion, as I mentioned above, by my behaviour.

The subject of the discourse was particular enough: It was about a prophet's story or parable of a ewe-lamb taken by a rich man from a poor one, who dearly loved it, and whose only comfort it was: designed to strike remorse into David, on his adultery with Uriah's wife Bathsheba, and his

murder of the husband. These women, Jack, have been the occasion of all manner of mischief from the beginning. Now, when David, full of indignation, swore [King David would swear, Jack: But how shouldst thou know who King David was?—The story is in the Bible] that the rich man should surely die; Nathan, which was the prophet's name, and a good ingenious fellow, cried out (which were the words of the text), *Thou art the man!* By my soul I thought the parson looked directly at me; and at that moment I cast my eye full on my ewe-lamb.—But I must tell thee too, that I thought a good deal of my Rosebud.—A better man than King David, in *that* point, however, thought I!

When we came home we talked upon the subject; and I showed my charmer my attention to the discourse, by letting her know where the Doctor made the most of his subject, and where it might have been touched to greater advantage: for it is really a very affecting story, and has as pretty a contrivance in it as ever I read. And this I did in such a grave way, that she seemed more and more pleased with me; and I have no doubt, that I shall get her to favour me to-morrow night with her company at my collation.

—o—

Sunday Evening.

We all dined together in Mrs. Sinclair's parlour:—All *excessively* right! The two nieces have topped their parts—Mrs. Sinclair hers. Never so easy as now!—'She really 'thought a little oddly of these people at first, she said! 'Mrs. Sinclair seemed very forbidding! Her nieces were 'persons with whom she could not wish to be acquainted. 'But really we should not be too hasty in our censures. 'Some people improve upon us. The widow seems *toler-* '*able.*' She went no farther than *tolerable.*—'Miss Martin 'and Miss Horton are young people of good sense, and 'have read a great deal. What Miss Martin particularly 'said of marriage, and of her humble servant, was very solid. 'She believes with such notions she cannot make a bad wife.'

I have said Sally's humble servant is a woollen-draper of great reputation; and she is soon to be married.

I have been letting her into thy character, and into the characters of my other three esquires, in hopes to excite her curiosity to see you to-morrow night. I have told her some of the *worst*, as well as *best* parts of your characters, in order to exalt myself, and to obviate any sudden surprises, as well as to teach her what sort of men she may expect to see, if she will oblige me with her company.

By her after observations upon each of you, I shall judge what I may or may not do to *obtain* or *keep* her good opinion; what she will *like*, or what *not;* and so pursue the one, or avoid the other, as I see proper. So, while she is penetrating into your shallow heads, I shall enter *her* heart, and know what to bid *my own* to hope for.

The house is to be taken in three weeks.—All will be over in three weeks, or bad will be my luck!—Who knows but in three days?—Have I not carried that great point of making her pass for my wife to the people below? And that other great one, of fixing myself here night and day?—What woman ever escaped me, who lodged under one roof with me?—The house too, THE house; the people—people after my own heart; her servants, Will. and Dorcas, both *my* servants.—*Three days*, did I say! Pho! Pho! Pho!—*three hours!*

I HAVE carried my third point: but so extremely to the dislike of my charmer, that I have been threatened, for suffering Miss Partington to be introduced to her without her leave. Which laid her under a necessity to deny or comply with the urgent request of so fine a young lady; who had engaged to honour me at my collation, on condition that my beloved would be present at it.

To be obliged to appear before my friends as what she was not! She was for insisting that I should acquaint the women here with the truth of the matter; and not go on propagating stories for her to countenance, making her a sharer in my guilt.

But what points will not perseverance carry? especially when it is covered over with the face of yielding *now*, and, Parthian-like, returning to the charge *anon*. Do not the sex carry all their points with their men by the same methods? Have I conversed with them so freely as I have done, and learnt nothing of them? Didst thou ever know that a woman's denial of any favour, whether the least or the greatest, that my heart was set upon, stood her in any stead? The more perverse she, the more steady I—that is my rule.

But the point thus so much against her will carried, I doubt thou wilt see in her more of a sullen than of an obliging charmer: for, when Miss Partington was withdrawn, " What was Miss Partington to her? In her situa-
" tion she wanted no new acquaintance. And what were
" my four friends to her in her present circumstances? She
" would assure me, if ever again"—and there she stopped, with a twirl of her hand.

When we meet, I will, in her presence, tipping thee a wink, show thee the motion, for it was a very pretty one. Quite new. Yet have I seen a hundred pretty passionate twirls too, in my time, from other fair ones. How universally engaging is it to put a woman of sense, to whom a man is not married, in a passion, let the reception given to every ranting scene in our plays testify. Take care, my charmer, now thou art come to delight me with thy angry twirls, that thou temptest me not to provoke a *variety of them* from one, whose every motion, whose every air, carries in it so much sense and soul.

But, angry or pleased, this charming creature must be all loveliness. Her features are all harmony, and made for one another. No other feature could be substituted in the place of any one of hers but must abate of her perfection. And think you that I do not long to have your opinion of my fair prize?

If you love to see features that glow, though the heart is frozen and never yet was thawed; if you love fine sense, and adages flowing through teeth of ivory and lips of coral;

an eye that penetrates all things; a voice that is harmony itself; an air of grandeur, mingled with a sweetness that cannot be described; a politeness that, if ever equalled, was never excelled—you'll see all these excellences, and ten times more, in this my GLORIANA.

> Mark her majestic fabric!—She's a temple,
> Sacred by birth, and built by hands divine;
> Her soul the deity that lodges there:
> Nor is the pile unworthy of the god.

Or, to describe her in a softer style with Rowe,

> The bloom of opening flowers, unsullied beauty,
> Softness, and sweetest innocence she wears,
> And looks like nature in the world's first spring.

Adieu, varlets four!—At six, on Monday evening, I expect ye all.

—o—

LETTER LXXXIII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Sunday, April 30.

[MR. LOVELACE, in his last letters, having taken notice of the most material passages contained in this letter, the following extracts from it are only inserted.

She gives pretty near the same account that he does of what passed between them on her resolution to go to church; and of his proposal of St. Paul's, and desire of attending her.—She praises his good behaviour there; as also the discourse, and the preacher.—Is pleased with its seasonableness.—Gives particulars of the conversation between them afterwards, and commends the good observations he makes upon the sermon.]

I am willing, says she, to have hopes of him: but am so unable to know how to depend upon his seriousness for an hour together, that all my favourable accounts of him in this respect must be taken with allowance.

Being very much pressed, I could not tell how to refuse dining with the widow and her nieces this day. I am better pleased with them than I ever thought I should be. I cannot help blaming myself for my readiness to give severe censures where reputation is concerned. People's ways, humours, constitutions, education, and opportunities allowed for, my dear, many persons, as far as I know, may appear blameless, whom others, of different humours and educations, are too apt to blame; and who from the same fault, may be as ready to blame *them*. I will therefore make it a rule to myself for the future—Never to judge peremptorily on first appearances: but yet I must observe that these are not people I should choose to be intimate with, or whose ways I can like: although, for the stations they are in, they may go through the world with tolerable credit.

Mr. Lovelace's behaviour has been such as makes me call this, so far as it is passed, an agreeable day. Yet, when easiest as to him, my situation with my friends takes place in my thoughts, and causes me many a tear.

I am the more pleased with the people of the house, because of the persons of rank they are acquainted with, and who visits them.

—o—

Sunday Evening.

I AM still well pleased with Mr. Lovelace's behaviour. We have had a good deal of serious discourse together. The man has really just and good notions. He confesses how much he is pleased with this day, and hopes for many such. Nevertheless, he ingeniously warned me, that his unlucky vivacity might return: but, he doubted not, that he should be fixed at last by my example and conversation.

He has given me an entertaining account of the four gentlemen he is to meet to-morrow night.—*Entertaining*, I mean for his humorous description of their persons, manners, &c., but such a description as is far from being to their praise. Yet he seemed rather to design to divert my melancholy by it than to degrade them. I think at bottom,

my dear, that he must be a good-natured man; but that he was spoiled young, for want of check or control.

I cannot but call this, my circumstances considered, a happy day to the end of it. Indeed, my dear, I think I could prefer him to all the men I ever knew, were he but to be always what he has been this day. You see how ready I am to own all you have charged me with, when I find myself out. It is a difficult thing, I believe sometimes, for a young creature that is able to deliberate with herself, to know when she loves, or when she hates: but I am resolved, as much as possible, to be determined both in my hatred and love by *actions*, as they make the man worthy or unworthy.

[She dates again on Monday, and declares herself highly displeased at Miss Partington's being introduced to her: and still more for being obliged to promise to be present at Mr. Lovelace's collation. She foresees, she says, a murdered evening.]

—o—

LETTER LXXXIV.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Monday Night, May 1.

I HAVE just escaped from the very disagreeable company I was obliged, so much against my will, to be in. As a very particular relation of this evening's conversation would be painful to me, you must content yourself with what you shall be able to collect from the outlines, as I may call them, of the characters of the persons; assisted by the little histories Mr. Lovelace gave me of each yesterday.

The names of the gentlemen are Belton, Mowbray, Tourville, and Belford. These four, with Mrs. Sinclair, Miss Partington, the great heiress mentioned in my last, Mr. Lovelace, and myself, made up the company.

I gave you before the favourable side of Miss Partington's character, such as it was given me by Mrs. Sinclair, and her

nieces. I will now add a few words from my own observation upon her behaviour in *this* company.

In *better* company perhaps she would have appeared to less disadvantage: but, notwithstanding her *innocent looks*, which Mr. Lovelace also highly praised, he is the last person whose judgment I would take upon real modesty. For I observed, that, upon some talk from the gentlemen, not free enough to be openly censured, yet too indecent in its implication to come from well-bred persons, in the company of virtuous people, this young lady was very ready to apprehend; and yet, by smiles and simperings, to encourage, rather than discourage, the culpable freedoms of persons, who, in what they went out of their way to say, must either be guilty of absurdity, meaning *nothing*, or meaning *something* of rudeness.*

But indeed I have seen women, of whom I had a better opinion than I can say I have of Mrs. Sinclair, who have allowed *gentlemen*, and *themselves* too, in greater liberties of this sort than I have thought consistent with that purity of manners which ought to be the distinguishing characteristic of our sex. For what are *words*, but the *body* and *dress* of *thought?* And is not the mind of a person strongly indicated by outward dress?

But to the *gentlemen*—as they must be called in right of their ancestors, it seems; for no other do they appear to have:—

Mr. Belton has had university education, and was designed for the gown; but that not suiting with the gaiety of his temper, and an uncle dying, who devised to him a good estate, he quitted the college, came up to town, and commenced fine gentleman. He is said to be a man of sense.—Mr. Belton dresses gaily, but not quite foppishly; drinks hard; keeps all hours, and glories in doing so; games, and has been hurt by that pernicious diversion: he is about thirty years of age: his face is of a fiery red, somewhat bloated and pimply; and his irregularities threaten a brief duration to the sensual dream he is in: for he has a short consumptive cough, which

* Mr. Belford, in Letter XLVIII. of vol. iii., reminds Mr. Lovelace of some particular topics which passed in their conversation, extremely to the lady's honour.

seems to denote bad lungs; yet makes himself and his friends merry by his stupid and inconsiderate jests upon very threatening symptoms which ought to make him more serious.

Mr. MOWBRAY has been a great traveller; speaks as many languages as Mr. Lovelace himself, but not so fluently: is of a good family: seems to be about thirty-three or thirty-four: tall and comely in his person: bold and daring in his look: is a large-boned, strong man: has a great scar in his forehead, with a dent, as if his skull had been beaten in there, and a seamed scar in his right cheek: he likewise dresses very gaily: has his servants always about him, whom he is continually calling upon, and sending on the most trifling messages—half a dozen instances of which we had in the little time I was among them; while they seem to watch the turn of his fierce eye, to be ready to run, before they have half his message, and serve him with fear and trembling. Yet to his equals the man seems tolerable: he talks not amiss upon public entertainments and diversions, especially upon those abroad: yet has a romancing air, and avers things strongly which seem quite improbable. Indeed he *doubts* nothing but what he ought to *believe;* for he jests upon sacred things; and professes to hate the clergy of all religions. He has high notions of *honour,* a word hardly ever out of his mouth; but seems to have no great regard to *morals.*

Mr. TOURVILLE occasionally told his age; just turned of thirty-one. He is also of an ancient family; but, in his person and manners, more of what I call the coxcomb than any of his companions. He dresses richly; would be thought elegant in the choice and fashion of what he wears; yet, after all, appears rather tawdry than fine.—One sees by the care he takes of his outside, and the notice he bespeaks from *every one* by his *own* notice of himself, that the inside takes up the least of his attention. He dances finely, Mr. Lovelace says; is a master of music, and singing is one of his principal excellences. They prevailed upon him to sing, and he obliged them both in Italian and French; and, to do him justice, his songs in both were decent. They were all highly delighted with his performance; but his greatest admirers

were Mrs. Sinclair, Miss Partington, and *himself*. To me he appeared to have a great deal of affectation.

Mr. Tourville's conversation and address are insufferably full of those really gross affronts upon the understanding of our sex, which the moderns call *compliments*, and are intended to pass for so many instances of good breeding, though the most hyperbolical, unnatural stuff that can be conceived, and which can only serve to show the insincerity of the *complimenter*, and the ridiculous light in which the *complimented* appears in his eyes, if he supposes a woman capable of relishing the romantic absurdities of his speeches.

He affects to introduce into his common talk Italian and French words; and often answers an English question in French, which language he greatly prefers to the barbarously hissing English. But then he never fails to translate into this his *odious* native tongue the words and the sentences he speaks in the other two—lest, perhaps, it should be questioned whether he understands what he says.

He loves to tell stories: always calls them *merry, facetious, good*, or *excellent*, before he begins, in order to bespeak the attention of the hearers, but never gives himself concern in the *progress* or *conclusion* of them, to make good what he promises in his *preface*. Indeed he seldom brings any of them to a conclusion; for if his company have patience to hear him out, he breaks in upon himself by so many parenthetical intrusions, as one may call them, and has so many incidents springing in upon him, that he frequently drops his own thread, and sometimes sits down satisfied half way; or, if at other times he would resume it, he applies to his company to help him in again, with a *Devil fetch him* if he remembers what he was driving at—but enough, and too much of Mr. Tourville.

Mr. Belford is the fourth gentleman, and one of whom Mr. Lovelace seems more fond than any of the rest; for he is a man of tried bravery, it seems; and this pair of friends came acquainted upon occasion of a quarrel (possibly about a woman), which brought on a challenge, and a meeting at Kensington Gravel-pits; which ended without

unhappy consequences, by the mediation of three gentlemen strangers, just as each had made a pass at the other.

Mr. Belford, it seems, is about seven or eight and twenty. He is the youngest of the five, except Mr. Lovelace, and they are perhaps the wickedest; for they seem to lead the other three as they please. Mr. Belford, as the others, dresses gaily; but has not those advantages of person, nor from his dress, which Mr. Lovelace is too proud of. He has, however, the appearance and air of a gentleman. He is well read in classical authors, and in the best English poets and writers; and, by his means, the conversation took now and then a more agreeable turn. And I, who endeavoured to put the best face I could upon my situation, as I passed for Mrs. Lovelace with them, made shift to join in it, at such times, and received abundance of compliments from all the company, on the observations I made.*

Mr. Belford seems good-natured and obliging; and, although very complaisant, not so fulsomely so as Mr. Tourville; and has a polite and easy manner of expressing his sentiments on all occasions. He seems to delight in a logical way of argumentation, as also does Mr. Belton. These two attacked each other in this way; and both looked at us women, as if to observe whether we did not admire their learning, or when they had said a smart thing, their wit. But Mr. Belford had visibly the advantage of the other, having quicker parts, and by taking the worst side of the argument, seemed to *think* he had. Upon the whole of his behaviour and conversation, he put me in mind of that character in Milton:—

> ——— His tongue
> Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear
> The better reason, to perplex and dash
> Maturest counsels; for his thoughts were low;
> To vice industrious: but to nobler deeds
> Tim'rous and slothful: yet he pleased the ear.

How little soever matters in general may be to our liking, we are apt, when hope is strong enough to permit it, to

* See Letter XLVIII. of vol. iii. above referred to.

endeavour to make the best we can of the lot we have drawn; and I could not but observe often, how much Mr. Lovelace excelled all his four friends in everything they seemed desirous to excel in. But as to wit and vivacity, he had no equal there. All the others gave up to him, when his lips began to open. The haughty Mowbray would call upon the prating Tourville for silence, and would elbow the supercilious Belton into attention, when Lovelace was going to speak. And when he had spoken, the words, Charming fellow! with a free word of admiration or envy, fell from every mouth.

He has indeed so many advantages in his person and manner, that what would be inexcusable in another, would, if one watched not over one's self, and did not endeavour to distinguish what is the essence of right and wrong, look becoming in him.

Mr. Belford, to my no small vexation and confusion, with the forwardness of a favoured and intrusted friend, singled me out, on Mr. Lovelace's being sent for down, to make me congratulatory compliments on my supposed nuptials; which he did with a caution not to insist too long on the rigorous vow I had imposed upon a man so universally admired—

'See him among twenty men,' said he, 'all of distinc-
' tion, and nobody is regarded but Mr. Lovelace.'

It must, indeed, be confessed that there is, in his whole deportment, a natural dignity which renders all insolent or imperative demeanour as unnecessary as inexcusable. Then that deceiving sweetness which appears in his smiles, in his accent, in his whole aspect, and address, when he thinks it worth his while to oblige, or endeavour to attract, how does this show that he was *born* innocent, as I may say; that he was not *naturally* the cruel, the boisterous, the impetuous creature, which the wicked company he may have fallen into have made him! For he has, besides, an open, and I think an honest countenance. Don't *you* think so, my dear? On all these specious appearances, have I founded my hopes of seeing him a reformed man.

But it is amazing to me, I own, that with so much of

the gentleman, such a general knowledge of books and men, such a skill in the learned as well as modern languages, he can take so much delight as he does in the company of such persons as I have described, and in subjects of frothy impertinence, unworthy of his talents, and his natural and acquired advantages. I can think but of one reason for it, and that must argue a very low mind,—his VANITY; which makes him desirous of being considered as the head of the people he consorts with.—A man to love praise, yet to be content to draw it from such contaminated springs!

One compliment passed from Mr. Belford to Mr. Lovelace, which hastened my quitting the shocking company—'You are a happy man, Mr. Lovelace,' said he, upon some fine speeches made him by Mrs. Sinclair, and assented to by Miss Partington:—'You have so much courage, and so much 'wit, that neither man nor woman can stand before you.'

Mr. Belford looked at me when he spoke: yes, my dear, he smilingly looked at me; and he looked upon his complimented friend; and all their *assenting*, and therefore *affronting* eyes, both men's and women's, were turned upon your Clarissa; at least, my self-reproaching heart made me think so: for that would hardly permit my eye to look up.

Oh! my dear, were but a woman, who gives reason to the world to think her to be in love with a man [And this must be believed to be my case; or to what can my *supposed* voluntary going off with Mr. Lovelace be imputed?], to reflect one moment on the exaltation she gives *him*, and the disgrace she brings upon *herself*,—the low pity, the silent contempt, the insolent sneers and whispers, to which she makes herself obnoxious from a censuring world of both sexes,—how would she despise herself! and how much more eligible would she think death itself than such a discovered debasement!

What I have thus in general touched upon, will account to you why I could not more particularly relate what passed in this evening's conversation: which, as may be gathered from what I have written, abounded with *approbatory* accusations, and *supposed* witty retorts.

LETTER LXXXV.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Monday, Midnight.

I AM very much vexed and disturbed at an odd incident. Mrs. Sinclair has just now left me; I believe in displeasure, on my declining to comply with a request she made me: which was to admit Miss Partington to a share in my bed, her house being crowded by her nieces' guests and by their attendants, as well as by those of Miss Partington.

There might be nothing in it; and my denial carried a stiff and ill-natured appearance. But instantly, upon her making the request, it came into my thought, 'that I was 'in a manner a stranger to everybody in the house: not 'so much as a servant I could call my own, or of whom I 'had any great opinion: that there were four men of free 'manners in the house, *avowed* supporters of Mr. Lovelace 'in matters of offence; himself a man of enterprise; all, as 'far as I knew (and as I had reason to think by their noisy 'mirth after I left them), drinking deeply: that Miss Part-'ington herself is not so bashful a person as she was repre-'sented to me to be: that *officious pains* were taken to give 'me a good opinion of her: and that Mrs. Sinclair made a 'greater parade in prefacing the request, than such a request 'needed. To deny, thought I, can carry only an appear-'ance of singularity to people who *already* think me singular. 'To consent may possibly, if not probably, be attended with 'inconveniences. The consequences of the alternative so 'very disproportionate, I thought it more prudent to incur 'the censure, than to risk the inconvenience.'

I told her that I was writing a long letter: that I should choose to write till I were sleepy, and that a companion would be a restraint upon me, and I upon her.

She was loth, she said, that so delicate a young creature, and so great a fortune as Miss Partington, should be put to lie with Dorcas in a press-bed. She should be very sorry,

if she had asked an improper thing. She had never been so put to it before. And Miss would stay up with *her* till I had done writing.

Alarmed at this urgency, and it being easier to persist in a denial *given*, than to give it at *first*, I said, Miss Partington should be welcome to my whole bed, and I would retire into the dining-room, and there, locking myself in, write all the night.

The poor thing, she said, was afraid to lie alone. To be sure Miss Partington would not put me to such an inconvenience.

She then withdrew,—but returned—begged my pardon for returning, but the poor child, she said, was in tears.—Miss Partington had never seen a young lady she so much admired, and so much wished to imitate as me. The dear girl hoped that nothing had passed in her behaviour to give me dislike to her.—Should she bring her to me?

I was very busy, I said: the letter I was writing was upon a very important subject. I hoped to see the young lady in the morning, when I would apologise to her for my particularity. And then Mrs. Sinclair hesitating, and moving towards the door (though she turned round to me again), I desired her (*lighting her*) to take care how she went down.

Pray, Madam, said she on the stairshead, don't give yourself all this trouble. God knows my heart, I meant no affront: but since you seem to take my freedom amiss, I beg you will not acquaint Mr. Lovelace with it; for he perhaps will think me bold and impertinent.

Now, my dear, is not this a particular incident, either as I have made it, or as it was designed? I don't love to do an uncivil thing. And if nothing were meant by the request, my refusal deserves to be called uncivil. Then I have shown a suspicion of foul usage by it, which surely dare not be meant. If *just*, I ought to apprehend everything, and fly the house and the man as I would an infection. If *not just*, and if I cannot contrive to clear myself of having entertained suspicions, by assigning some other plausible

reason for my denial, the very *staying here* will have an appearance not at all reputable to myself.

I am now out of humour with him,—with myself,—with all the world, but you. His companions are shocking creatures. Why, again I repeat, should he have been desirous to bring me into such company? Once more I like him not.—Indeed I do not like him!

—o—

LETTER LXXXVI.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Tuesday, May 2.

WITH infinite regret I am obliged to tell you, that I can no longer write to you, or receive letters from you.—Your mother has sent me a letter enclosed in a cover to Mr. Lovelace, directed for him at Lord M.'s (and which was brought him just now), reproaching me on this subject in very angry terms, and forbidding me, 'as I would not be 'thought to intend to make her and you unhappy, to write 'to you without her leave.'

This, therefore, is the last you must receive from me, till happier days. And as my prospects are not very bad, I presume we shall soon have leave to write again; and even to see each other: since an alliance with a family so honourable as Mr. Lovelace's is will not be a disgrace.

She is pleased to write, 'That if I would wish to *inflame* 'you, I should let you know her written prohibition: but 'if otherwise, find some way of my own accord (without 'bringing *her* into the question) to decline a correspondence, 'which I must know she has for some time past forbidden.' But all I can say is, to beg of you *not* to be inflamed: to beg of you not to let her *know*, or even by your behaviour to her, on this occasion, *guess* that I have acquainted you with my reason for declining to write to you. For how else, after the scruples I have heretofore made on this very

subject, yet proceeding to correspond, can I honestly satisfy you about my motives for this sudden stop? So, my dear, I choose, you see, rather to rely upon your discretion, than to feign reasons with which you would not be satisfied, but with your usual active penetration, sift to the bottom, and at last find me to be a mean and low qualifier; and that with an implication injurious to you, that I supposed you had not prudence enough to be trusted with the naked truth.

I repeat, that my prospects are not bad. 'The house, I 'presume, will soon be taken. The people here are very 'respectful, notwithstanding my nicety about Miss Par- 'tington. Miss Martin, who is near marriage with an 'eminent tradesman in the Strand, just now, in a very 'respectful manner, asked my opinion of some patterns of 'rich silks for the occasion. The widow has a less for- 'bidding appearance than at first. Mr. Lovelace, on my 'declared dislike of his four friends, has assured me that 'neither they nor anybody else shall be introduced to me 'without my leave.'

These circumstances I mention (as you will suppose) that your kind heart may be at ease about me; that you may be induced by them to acquiesce with your mother's commands (*cheerfully* acquiesce), and that for *my sake*, lest I should be thought an *inflamer*; who am, with very contrary intentions, my dearest and best beloved friend,

Your ever obliged and affectionate

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

—o—

LETTER LXXXVII.

Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

Wednesday, May 3.

I AM astonished that my mother should take such a step —purely to exercise an unreasonable act of authority; and to oblige the most remorseless hearts in the world. If I

find that I can be of use to you, either by advice or information, do you think I will not give it!—Were it to any other person, much *less* dear to me than you are, do you think, in such a case, I would forbear giving it?

Mr. Hickman, who pretends to a little casuistry in such nice matters, is of opinion that I ought not to decline a correspondence thus circumstanced. And it is well he is; for my mother having set me up, I must have somebody to quarrel with.

This I will come into if it will make you easy—I will forbear to write to *you* for a few days, if nothing extraordinary happen, and till the rigour of her prohibition is abated. But be assured that I will not dispense with your writing to *me*. My heart, my conscience, my honour will not permit it.

But how will I help myself?—How!—easily enough. For I do assure you that I want but very little farther provocation to fly privately to London. And if I do, I will not leave you till I see you either honourably married, or absolutely quit of the wretch: and, in this last case, I will take you down with me, in defiance of the whole world: or, if you refuse to go with me, stay with you, and accompany you as your shadow whithersoever you go.

Don't be frighted at this declaration. There is but one consideration, and but one hope, that withhold me, watched as I am in all my retirements; obliged to read to her without a voice; to work in her presence without fingers; and to lie with her every night against my will. The *consideration* is, lest you should apprehend that a step of this nature would look like a doubling of your fault, in the eyes of such as think your going away a fault. The *hope* is, that things will still end happily, and that some people will have reason to take shame to themselves for the sorry part they have acted. Nevertheless I am often balancing—but your resolving to give up the correspondence at this crisis will turn the scale. *Write*, therefore, or *take the consequence*.

A few words upon the subject of your last letters. I know not whether your brother's wise project be given up or not.

A dead silence reigns in your family. Your brother was absent three days; then at home one; and is now absent: but whether with Singleton or not, I cannot find out.

By your account of your wretch's companions, I see not but they are a set of *infernals,* and he the *Beelzebub.* What could he mean, as you say, by his earnestness to bring you into such company, and to give you such an opportunity to make him and them reflecting-glasses to one another? The man's a *fool,* to be sure, my dear—a *silly fellow,* at least—the wretches must put on their *best* before you, no doubt—Lords of the creation!—noble fellows these!—Yet who knows how many poor despicable souls of our sex the worst of them has had to whine after him!

You have brought an inconvenience upon yourself, as you observe, by your refusal of Miss Partington for your bedfellow. Pity you had not admitted her! watchful as *you* are, what *could* have happened? If violence were intended, he would not stay for the *night.* You might have sat up after her, or not gone to bed. Mrs. Sinclair pressed it too far. You was over-scrupulous.

If anything happen to delay your nuptials, I would advise you to remove: but, if you marry, perhaps you may think it no great matter to stay where you are till you take possession of your own estate. The knot once tied, and with so resolute a man, it is my opinion your relations will soon resign what they cannot legally hold: and, were even a litigation to follow, you will not be *able,* nor ought you to be *willing,* to help it: for your estate will then be his right; and it will be unjust to wish it to be withheld from him.

One thing I would advise you to think of; and that is, of proper settlements: it will be to the credit of your prudence and of his justice (and the more as matters stand) that something of this should be done before you marry. Bad as he is, nobody accounts him a sordid man. And I wonder he has been hitherto silent on that subject.

I am not displeased with his proposal about the widow lady's house. I think it will do very well. But if it must

be three weeks before you can be certain about it, surely you need not put off his day for that space: and he may bespeak his equipages. Surprising to me, as well as to you, that he could be so acquiescent!

I repeat—continue to write to me. I insist upon it; and that as minutely as possible: or, take the consequence. I send this by a particular hand. I am, and ever will be,

Your most affectionate

ANNA HOWE.

—o—

LETTER LXXXVIII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Thursday, May 4.

I FOREGO every other engagement, I suspend every wish, I banish every other fear, to take up my pen, to beg of you that you will not think of being *guilty* of such an act of love as I can never thank you for; but must for ever regret. If I *must* continue to write to you, I must. I know full well your impatience of control, when you have the least imagination that your generosity or friendship is likely to be wounded by it.

My dearest, dearest creature, would you incur a maternal, as I have a paternal, malediction? Would not the world think there was an infection in my fault, if it were to be followed by Miss Howe? There are some points so flagrantly wrong that they will not bear to be argued upon. This is one of them. I need *not* give reasons against such a rashness. Heaven forbid that it should be known that you had it but once in your *thought*, be your motives ever so noble and generous, to follow so bad an example, the rather, as that you would, in such a case, want the extenuations that might be pleaded in my favour; and particularly that one of being *surprised* into the unhappy step!

The restraint your mother lays you under would not have appeared heavy to you but on my account. Would you

have once thought it a hardship to be admitted to a part of her bed?—How did I use to be delighted with such a favour from *my* mother! how did I love to work in her presence! —So did you in the presence of yours once. And to read to her in winter evenings I know was one of your joys.— Do not give me cause to reproach *myself* on the reason that may be assigned for the change in *you*.

Learn, my dear, I beseech you, learn to subdue your own passions. Be the motives what they will, excess is excess. Those passions in our sex, which we take no pains to subdue, may have one and the same source with those infinitely blacker passions, which we used so often to condemn in the violent and headstrong of the other sex; and which may be only heightened in *them* by *custom*, and their *freer education*. Let us both, my dear, ponder well this thought; look into ourselves, and fear.

If I write, as I find I must, I insist upon *your* forbearing to write. Your silence to *this* shall be the sign to me that you will not think of the rashness you threaten me with: and that you will obey your mother as to *your own* part of the correspondence, however; especially as you can inform or advise me in every weighty case by Mr. Hickman's pen.

My trembling writing will show you, my dear impetuous creature, what a trembling heart you have given to

Your ever obliged, or, if you take so rash a step,

Your for ever disobliged,

CLARISSA HARLOWE.

My clothes were brought to me just now. But you have so much discomposed me, that I have no heart to look into the trunks. Why, why, my dear, will you fright me with your flaming love? Discomposure gives distress to a weak heart, whether it arise from friendship or enmity.

A servant of Mr. Lovelace carries this to Mr. Hickman for despatch-sake. Let that worthy man's pen relieve my heart from this new uneasiness.

LETTER LXXXIX.

Mr. Hickman to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

[Sent to Wilson's by a particular hand.]

Friday, May 5.

MADAM,—I have the honour of dear Miss Howe's commands to acquaint you, without knowing the occasion, 'That she is excessively concerned for the concern she has 'given you in her last letter: and that, if you will but 'write to her, under cover as before, she will have no 'thoughts of what you are so very apprehensive about.'—Yet she bid me write, 'That if she has but the *least* imagina-'tion that she can *serve* you, and *save* you, those are her words, 'all the censures of the world will be but of second 'consideration with her.' I have great temptations, on this occasion, to express my own resentments upon your present state; but not being fully apprised of what that is—only conjecturing from the disturbance upon the mind of the dearest lady in the world to me, and the most sincere of friends to you, that *that* is not altogether so happy as were to be wished; and being, moreover, forbid to enter into the cruel subject; I can only offer, *as I do*, my best and faithfullest services! and wish you a happy deliverance from all your troubles. For I am,

Most excellent young lady,

Your faithful and most obedient servant,

CH. HICKMAN.

—o—

LETTER XC.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Tuesday, May 2.

MERCURY, as the fabulist tells us, having the curiosity to know the estimation he stood in among mortals, descended in disguise, and in a statuary's shop cheapened a Jupiter,

then a Juno, then one, then another, of the *dii majores;* and at last asked, What price that same statue of *Mercury* bore? Oh, sir, says the artist, buy one of the others, and I'll throw you in that for nothing.

How sheepish must the god of thieves look upon this rebuff to his vanity.

So thou! a thousand pounds wouldst thou give for the good opinion of this single lady—to be only thought tolerably of, and not quite unworthy of her conversation, would make thee happy. And at parting last night, or rather this morning, thou madest me promise a few lines to Edgware, to let thee know what she thinks of thee, and of thy brethren.

Thy thousand pounds, Jack, is all thy own: for most heartily does she dislike ye all—thee as much as any of the rest.

I am sorry for it, too, as to thy part; for two reasons—*one,* that I think thy motive for thy curiosity was fear or consciousness: whereas that of the arch-thief was vanity, intolerable vanity: and he was therefore justly sent away with a blush upon his cheeks to heaven, and could not brag —the *other,* that I am afraid, if she dislikes *thee,* she dislikes *me:* for are we not birds of a feather?

I must never talk of reformation, she told me, having such companions, and taking such delight, as I seemed to take, in their frothy conversation.

I, no more than you, Jack, imagined she could possibly like ye: but then, as *my* friends, I thought a person of her education would have been more sparing of her censures.

I don't know how it is, Belford; but women think themselves entitled to take any freedoms with us; while we are unpolite, forsooth, and I can't tell what, if we don't tell a pack of cursed lies, and make black white, in *their* favour—teaching us to be hypocrites, yet stigmatising us, at other times, for deceivers.

I defended ye all as well as I could: but you know there was no attempting aught but a palliative defence, to one of her principles.

I will summarily give thee a few of my pleas.

'To the *pure*, every little deviation seemed offensive: yet 'I saw not, that there was anything amiss the whole even- 'ing, either in the words or behaviour of any of my friends. 'Some people could talk but upon *one* or *two* subjects: 'she upon *every one:* no wonder, therefore, *they* talked 'to what they understood best; and to mere objects of 'sense. Had she honoured us with more of *her* conversa- 'tion, she would have been less disgusted with *ours;* for 'she saw how every one was prepared to admire her, when- 'ever she opened her lips. You, in particular, had said, 'when she retired, that virtue itself spoke when she spoke: 'but that you had such an awe upon you, after she had 'favoured us with an observation or two on a subject 'started, that you should ever be afraid in her company to 'be found *most* exceptionable, when you intended to be 'least so.'

Plainly, she said, she neither liked my companions nor the house she was in.

I liked not the house any more than she: though the people were very obliging, and she had owned they were less exceptionable to herself than at first. And were we not about another of our own?

She did not like Miss Partington—let her fortune be what it would, and she had heard a great deal said of her fortune, she should not choose an intimacy with her. She thought it was a hardship to be put upon such a difficulty as she was put upon the preceding night, when there were lodgers in the front house, whom they had reason to be freer with, than upon so short an acquaintance with her.

I pretended to be an utter stranger as to this particular; and when she explained herself upon it, condemned Mrs. Sinclair's request, and called it a confident one.

She *artfully* made lighter of her denial of the girl for a bedfellow, than she *thought* of it, I could see that; for it was plain, she supposed there was room for me to think she had been either *over-nice,* or *over-cautious.*

I offered to resent Mrs. Sinclair's freedom.

No; there was no great matter in it. It was best to let it pass. It might be thought more particular in her to deny such a request, than in Mrs. Sinclair to make it, or in Miss Partington to expect it to be complied with. But as the people below had a large acquaintance, she did not know how often she might have her retirements invaded, if she gave way. And indeed there were levities in the behaviour of that young lady, which she could not so far pass over as to wish an intimacy with her.

I said I liked Miss Partington as little as *she* could. Miss Partington was a silly young creature; who seemed too likely to justify the watchfulness of her guardians over her. —But, nevertheless, as to her general conversation and behaviour last night, I must own that I thought the girl (for *girl* she was, as to discretion) not exceptionable; only carrying herself like a free good-natured creature who believed herself secure in the honour of her company.

It was very well said of me, she replied: but if that young lady were so well satisfied with her company, she must needs say, that I was very kind to suppose her such an *innocent*—for her own part, she had seen nothing of the London world: but thought, she must tell me plainly, that she never was in such company in her life; nor ever again wished to be in such.

There, Belford!—Worse off than Mercury!—Art thou not?

I was nettled. Hard would be the lot of *more* discreet women, as far as I knew, than Miss Partington, were they to be judged by so rigid a virtue as hers.

Not so, she said: but if I really saw nothing exceptionable to a virtuous mind, in that young person's behaviour, my ignorance of *better* behaviour was, she must needs tell me, as pitiable as *hers:* and it were to be wished that minds *so* paired, for their own sakes, should never be separated.

See, Jack, what I get by my charity!

I thanked her heartily. But said, that I must take the liberty to observe, that good folks were generally so uncharitable, that, devil take me, if I would choose to be good,

were the consequence to be that I must think hardly of the whole world besides.

She congratulated me upon my charity; but told me, that to *enlarge her own*, she hoped it would not be expected of her to approve of the *low company* I had brought her into last night.

No exception for thee, Belford!—Safe is thy thousand pounds.

I saw not, I said, begging her pardon, that she liked *anybody*—[*Plain dealing for plain dealing, Jack!—Why then did she abuse my friends?*] However, let me but know whom and what she did or did not like; and if possible, I would like and dislike the very same persons and things.

She bid me then, in a pet, *dislike myself.*

Cursed severe!—Does she think she must not pay for it one day, or one night?—And if one, many; *that's my comfort.*

I was in such a train of being happy, I said, before my earnestness to procure her to favour my friends with her company, that I wished the devil had had as well my friends as Miss Partington—and yet, I must say, that I saw not how good people could answer half their end, which is to reform the wicked by precept as well as example, were they to accompany *only* with the good.

I had like to have been blasted by two or three flashes of lightning from her indignant eyes; and she turned scornfully from me, and retired to her own apartment.

Once more, Jack, safe, as thou seest, is thy thousand pounds.

She says, I am not a polite man. But is she, in the instance before us, more polite for a woman?

And now, dost thou not think that I owe my charmer some revenge for her cruelty in obliging such a fine young creature, and so vast a fortune, as Miss Partington, to crowd into a press-bed with Dorcas the maid-servant of the proud refuser?—Miss Partington too (with tears) declared, by Mrs. Sinclair, that would Mrs. Lovelace do her the honour of a visit at Barnet, the best bed and best room in her guardian's house should be at her service. Thinkest thou that I could not guess at her dishonourable fears of me?—

that she apprehended that the supposed *husband* would endeavour to take possession of *his own?*—and that Miss Partington would be willing to contribute to such a piece of justice?

Thus, then, thou both remindest and defiest me, charmer! —And since thou reliest more on thy own precaution than upon my honour; be it unto thee, fair one, as thou apprehendest!

And now, Jack, let me know, what thy opinion and the opinions of thy brother varlets are of my Gloriana.

I have just now heard that Hannah hopes to be soon well enough to attend her young lady, when in London. It seems the girl has had no physician. I must send her one, out of pure love and respect to her mistress. Who knows but medicine may *weaken* nature, and *strengthen* the disease?—As her malady is not a *fever*, very likely it may do so.—But perhaps the wench's hopes are too forward. *Blustering weather in this month yet.*—And that is bad for rheumatic complaints.

—o—

LETTER XCI.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Tuesday, May 2.

JUST as I had sealed up the enclosed, comes a letter to my beloved, in a cover to me, directed to Lord M.'s. From whom, thinkest thou?—From Mrs. Howe!

And what the contents?

How should I know, unless the dear creature had communicated them to me? But a very cruel letter I believe it is *by the effect it had upon her.* The tears ran down her cheeks as she read it; and her colour changed several times. No end of her persecutions, I think!

'What a cruelty in my fate!' said the sweet lamenter. —'Now the *only* comfort of my life must be given up!'

Miss Howe's correspondence, no doubt.

But *should* she be so much grieved at this? This correspondence was prohibited before, and that, to the *daughter*, in the strongest terms: but yet carried on by *both*; although a *brace of impeccables*, an't please ye. Could they expect that a mother would not vindicate her authority?—And finding her prohibition ineffectual with her perverse *daughter*, was it not reasonable to suppose she would try what effect it would have upon her *daughter's friend?*—And now I believe the end will be effectually answered: for my beloved, I daresay, will make a point of conscience of it.

I hate cruelty, especially in *women*; and should have been more concerned for this instance of it in Mrs. Howe, had I not had a stronger instance of the same in my beloved to Miss Partington. For how did she know, since she was so much afraid for *herself*, whom Dorcas might let in to that innocent and *less watchful* young lady? But nevertheless I must needs own, that I am not very sorry for this prohibition, let it *originally* come from the *Harlowes*, or *from whom it will*; because I make no doubt that it is owing to Miss Howe, in a great measure, that my beloved is so much upon her guard, and thinks so hardly of me. And who can tell, *as characters here are so tender*, and *some disguises so flimsy*, what consequences might follow this undutiful correspondence?—I say, therefore, I am not sorry for it: now will she not have anybody to compare notes with: anybody to alarm her: and I may be saved the guilt and disobligation of inspecting into a correspondence that has long made me uneasy.

How everything works for me!—Why will this charming creature make *such contrivances* necessary, as will increase my trouble, and my guilt too, as some will account it? But why, rather I should ask, will she fight against her stars?

—o—

LETTER XCII.

Mr. Belford to Robert Lovelace, Esq.

Edgware, Tuesday Night, May 2.

WITHOUT staying for the promised letter from you to inform us what the lady says of *us*, I write to tell you, that we are all of *one* opinion with regard to *her;* which is, that there is not of her age a finer woman in the world, as to her understanding. As for her person, she is at the age of bloom, and an admirable creature; a perfect beauty: but this *poorer* praise, a man, who has been honoured with her conversation, can hardly descend to give; and yet she was brought amongst us contrary to her will.

Permit me, dear Lovelace, to be a mean of saving this excellent creature from the dangers she hourly runs from the most plotting heart in the world. In a former, I pleaded your own family, Lord M.'s wishes particularly; and then I had not seen her: but now, I join *her* sake, *honour's* sake, motives of justice, generosity, gratitude, and humanity, which are all concerned in the preservation of so fine a woman. Thou knowest not the anguish I should have had (whence arising, I cannot devise), had I not known before I set out this morning, that the incomparable creature had disappointed thee in thy cursed view of getting her to admit the specious Partington for a bedfellow.

I have done nothing but talk of this lady ever since I saw her. There is something *so awful*, and yet *so sweet*, in her aspect, that were I to have the virtues and the graces all drawn in one piece, they should be taken, every one of them, from different airs and attributes in her. She was born to adorn the age she was given to, and would be an ornament to the first dignity. What a piercing, yet gentle eye; every glance I thought mingled with love and fear of you! What a sweet smile darting through the cloud that overspread her fair face, demonstrating that she had more apprehensions and grief at her heart than she cared to express!

You may think what I am going to write too flighty; but, by my faith, I have conceived such a profound reverence for her sense and judgment, that, far from thinking the man excusable who should treat her basely, I am ready to regret that such an angel of a woman should even marry. She is in my eye all mind: and were she to meet with a man all mind likewise, why should the charming qualities she is mistress of be endangered? Why should such an angel be plunged so low as into the vulgar offices of domestic life? Were she mine, I should hardly wish to see her a mother, unless there were a kind of moral certainty that minds like hers could be propagated. For why, in short, should not the work of bodies be left to *mere* bodies? I know, that you yourself have an opinion of her little less exalted. Belton, Mowbray, Tourville, are all of my mind; are full of her praises; and swear it would be a million of pities to ruin a woman in whose fall none but devils can rejoice.

What must that merit and excellence be which can extort this from *us*, freelivers, like yourself, and all of us your partial friends, who have joined with you in your just resentments against the rest of her family, and offered our assistance to execute your vengeance on them? But we cannot think it reasonable that you should punish an innocent creature, who loves you so well, and who is in your protection, and has suffered so much for you, for the faults of her relations.

And here let me put a serious question or two. Thinkest thou, truly admirable as this lady is, that the *end* thou proposest to thyself, if obtained, is answerable to the *means*, to the trouble thou givest thyself, and to the perfidies, tricks, stratagems, and contrivances thou hast already been guilty of, and still meditatest? In every real excellence she surpasses all her sex. But in the article thou seekest to subdue her for, a mere sensualist, a Partington, a Horton, a Martin, would make a sensualist a thousand times happier than she either will or can.

Sweet are the joys that come with willingness.

And wouldst thou make *her* unhappy for her whole life, and *thyself* not happy for a single moment?

Hitherto, it is not too late; and that perhaps is as much as can be said, if thou meanest to preserve her esteem and good opinion, as well as person; for I think it is impossible she can get out of thy hands now she is in this accursed house. Oh that damned hypocritical *Sinclair*, as thou callest her! How was it possible she should behave so speciously as she did all the time the lady stayed with us!—Be honest, and marry; and be thankful that she will condescend to have thee. If thou dost not, thou wilt be the worst of men; and wilt be condemned in this world and the next: as I am sure thou oughtest, and shouldest too, wert thou to be judged by one, who never before was so much touched in a woman's favour; and whom thou knowest to be

Thy partial friend,

J. BELFORD.

Our companions consented that I should withdraw to write to the above effect. They can make nothing of the characters we write in; so I read this to them. They approve of it; and of their own motion each man would set his name to it. I would not delay sending it, for fear of some detestable scheme taking place.

THOMAS BELTON,
RICHARD MOWBRAY,
JAMES TOURVILLE.

Just now are brought me both yours. I vary not my opinion, nor forbear my earnest prayers to you in her behalf, notwithstanding her dislike of me.

—o—

LETTER XCIII.

Mr. Lovelace to John Belford, Esq.

Wednesday, May 3.

WHEN I have already taken pains to acquaint thee in full with regard to my views, designs, and resolutions, with regard to this admirable woman, it is very extraordinary that thou shouldst vapour as thou dost in her behalf, when I have made no trial, no attempt: and yet, givest it as thy opinion in a former letter, that advantage *may be* taken of the situation she is in; and that she *may be* overcome.

Most of thy reflections, particularly that which respects the difference as to the joys to be given by the virtuous and the libertine of her sex, are fitter to come in as after reflections than as *antecedencies*.

I own with thee, and with the poet, *that sweet are the joys that come with willingness*.—But is it to be expected, that a *woman of education*, and a *lover of forms*, will yield before she is attacked? And have I so much as summoned this to surrender? I doubt not but I shall meet with difficulty. I must therefore make my first effort by surprise. There may possibly be some *cruelty* necessary: but there may be *consent in struggle*; there may be *yielding in resistance*. But the first conflict over, whether the following may not be weaker and weaker, till *willingness* ensue, is the point to be tried. I will illustrate what I have said by the simile of a bird new caught. We begin, when boys, with birds; and when grown up, go on to women; and both perhaps, in turn, experience our sportive cruelty.

Hast thou not observed the charming gradations by which the ensnared volatile has been brought to bear with its new condition? how, at first, refusing all sustenance, it beats and bruises itself against its wires, till it makes its gay plumage fly about, and overspread its well-secured cage. Now it gets out its head; sticking only at its beautiful shoulders: then, with difficulty, drawing back its head,

it gasps for breath, and erectly perched with meditating eyes, first surveys, and then attempts its wired canopy. As it gets breath, with renewed rage it beats and bruises again its pretty head and sides, bites the wires, and pecks at the fingers of its delighted tamer. Till at last, finding its efforts ineffectual, quite tired and breathless, it lays itself down and pants at the bottom of the cage, seeming to bemoan its cruel fate and forfeited liberty. And after a few days, its struggles to escape still diminishing as it finds it to no purpose to attempt it, its new habitation becomes familiar; and it hops about from perch to perch, resumes its wonted cheerfulness, and every day sings a song to amuse itself and reward its keeper.

Now let me tell thee, that I have known a bird actually starve itself, and die with grief, at its being caught and caged. But never did I meet with a woman who was so silly.—Yet have I heard the dear souls most vehemently threaten their own lives on such an occasion. But it is saying nothing in a woman's favour, if we do not allow her to have *more sense than a bird.* And yet we must all own, that it is more difficult to catch a *bird* than a *lady.*

To pursue the comparison.—If the disappointment of the captivated lady be very great, she will threaten, indeed, as I said: she will even refuse her sustenance for some time, especially if you entreat her much, and she thinks she gives you concern by her refusal. But then the stomach of the dear sullen one will soon return. 'Tis pretty to see how she comes to by degrees: pressed by appetite, she will first steal, perhaps, a weeping morsel by herself; then be brought to piddle and sigh, and sigh and piddle before you; now and then, if her viands be unsavoury, swallowing with them a relishing tear or two: then she comes to eat and drink, to oblige you: then resolves to live for your sake: her exclamations will, in the next place, be turned into blandishments; her vehement upbraidings into gentle murmuring—how *dare* you, traitor!—into how *could* you, dearest! She will draw you to her, instead of pushing you from her: no longer, with unsheathed claws, will she resist you; but, like a pretty,

playful, wanton kitten with gentle paws, and concealed talons, tap your cheek, and with intermingled smiles, and tears, and caresses, implore your consideration for her, and your *constancy:* all the favour she then has to ask of you!—And this is the time, were it given to man to confine himself to one object, to be happier every day than another.

Now, Belford, were I to go no farther than I have gone with my beloved Miss Harlowe, how shall I know the difference between *her* and *another* bird? To let her fly now, what a pretty jest would that be!—How do I know, except I try, whether she may not be brought to sing me a fine song, and to be as well contented as I have brought other birds to be, and very shy ones too?

But now let us reflect a little upon the confounded partiality of us human creatures. I can give two or three familiar, and if they were *not familiar,* they would be *shocking,* instances of the cruelty both of men and women, with respect to other creatures, perhaps as worthy as (at least more innocent than) themselves. By my soul, Jack, there is more of the savage in human nature than we are commonly aware of. Nor is it, after all, so much amiss, that we sometimes avenge the more innocent animals upon our own species.

To particulars:

How usual a thing is it for women as well as men, without the least remorse, to ensnare, to cage, and torment, and even with burning knitting-needles to put out the eyes of the poor feathered songster [thou seest I have not yet done with birds]; which however, in proportion to its bulk, has more life than themselves (for a bird is all soul); and of consequence has as much feeling as the human creature! when at the same time, if an honest fellow, by the gentlest persuasion and the softest arts, has the good luck to prevail upon a mew'd-up lady, to countenance her own escape, and she consents to break cage, and be set a flying into the all-cheering air of liberty, mercy on us! what an outcry is generally raised against him!

Just like what you and I once saw raised in a paltry

village near Chelmsford, after a poor hungry fox, who, watching his opportunity, had seized by the neck, and shouldered a sleek-feathered goose: at what time we beheld the whole vicinage of boys and girls, old men, and old women, all the furrows and wrinkles of the latter filled up with malice for the time; the old men armed with prongs, pitch-forks, clubs, and catsticks; the old women with mops, brooms, fire-shovels, tongs, and pokers; and the younger fry with dirt, stones, and brickbats, gathering as they ran like a snowball, in pursuit of the wind-outstripping prowler; all the mongrel curs of the *circumjacencies* yelp, yelp, yelp, at their heels, completing the horrid chorus.

Rememberest thou not this scene? Surely thou must. My imagination, inflamed by a tender sympathy for the danger of the adventurous marauder, represents it to my eye as if it were but yesterday. And dost thou not recollect how generously glad we were, as if our own case, that honest reynard, by the help of a lucky stile, over which both old and young tumbled upon one another, and a winding course, escaped their brutal fury and flying catsticks; and how, in fancy, we followed him to his undiscovered retreat; and imagined we beheld the intrepid thief enjoying his dear-earned purchase with a delight proportioned to his past danger?

I once made a charming little savage severely repent the delight she took in seeing her tabby favourite make cruel sport with a pretty, sleek, bead-eyed mouse, before she devoured it. Egad, my love, said I to myself, as I sat meditating the scene, I am determined to lie in wait for a fit opportunity to try how *thou* wilt like to be tost over my head, and be caught again: how *thou* wilt like to be parted from me, and pulled to me. Yet will I rather give life than take it away, as this barbarous quadruped has at last done by her prey. And after all was over between my girl and me, I reminded her of the incident to which my resolution was owing.

Nor had I at another time any mercy upon the daughter of an old epicure, who had taught the girl, without the least

remorse, to roast lobsters alive; to cause a poor pig to be whipt to death; to scrape carp the contrary way of the scales, making them leap in the stewpan, and dressing them in their own blood for sauce. And this for luxury sake, and to provoke an appetite; which I had without stimulation, in my way, and that I can tell thee a very ravenous one.

Many more instances of the like nature could I give, were I to leave nothing to thyself, to show that the best take the same liberties, and perhaps worse, with some sort of creatures, that we take with others; all *creatures* still! and creatures too, as I have observed above, replete with strong life, and sensible feeling!—If therefore people pretend to mercy, let mercy go through all their actions. I have read somewhere, *that a merciful man is merciful to his beast.*

So much at present for those parts of thy letter in which thou urgest to me motives of compassion for the lady.

But I guess at thy principal motive in this thy earnestness in behalf of this charming creature. I know that thou correspondest with Lord M. who is impatient, and has long been desirous to see me shackled. And thou wantest to make a merit with the uncle, with a view to one of his nieces. But knowest thou not, that *my consent* will be wanting to complete thy wishes?—And what a commendation will it be of thee to such a girl as Charlotte, when I shall acquaint her with the affront thou puttest upon the whole sex, by asking, *Whether I think my reward, when I have subdued the most charming woman in the world, will be equal to my trouble?*—Which, thinkest thou, will a woman of spirit soonest forgive; the undervaluing varlet who *can put such a question;* or him, who *prefers the pursuit and conquest of a fine woman to all the joys of life?* Have I not known even *a virtuous woman,* as she would be thought, vow everlasting antipathy to a man who gave out that she was *too old for him to attempt?* And did not Essex's personal reflection on Queen Elizabeth, that she was *old and crooked,* contribute more to his ruin than his treason?

But another word or two, as to thy objection relating to my trouble and reward.

Does not the keen fox-hunter endanger his neck and his bones in pursuit of a vermin, which, when killed, is neither fit food for men nor dogs?

Do not the hunters of the noble game value the venison less than the sport?

Why then should I be reflected upon, and the sex affronted, for my patience and perseverance in the most noble of all chases; and for not being a poacher in love, as thy question may be *made to imply?*

Learn of thy master, for the future, to treat more respectfully a sex that yields us our principal diversions and delights.

Proceed anon.

—o—

LETTER XCIV.

Mr. Lovelace.

[In continuation.]

WELL sayest thou, that mine is the *most plotting heart in the world.* Thou dost me honour; and I thank thee heartily. Thou art no bad judge. How like Boileau's parson I strut behind my double chin! Am I not obliged to deserve thy compliment? And wouldst thou have me repent of a murder before I have committed it?

'The Virtues and Graces are this lady's handmaids. 'She was certainly born to adorn the age she was given 'to.'—Well said, Jack—'And would be an ornament to 'the first dignity.' But what praise is that, unless the first dignity were adorned with the first merit?—Dignity! gew-gaw!—*First dignity!* thou idiot!—Art thou, who knowest *me,* so taken with ermine and tinsel?—I, who have won the gold, am only fit to wear it. For the future therefore correct thy style, and proclaim her the ornament of the happiest man, and (respecting herself and sex) the greatest conqueror in the world.

Then, that she *loves me,* as thou imaginest, by no means

appears clear to me. Her conditional offers to renounce me; the little confidence she places in me; entitle me to ask, what merit can she have with a man who won her in spite of herself; and who fairly, in set and obstinate battle, took her prisoner?

As to what thou inferrest from her *eye* when with us, thou knowest nothing of her *heart* from that, if thou imaginest there was one glance of love shot from it. Well did I note her eye, and plainly did I see, that it was all but just civil disgust to me and to the company I had brought her into. Her early retiring that night, against all entreaty, might have convinced thee that there was very little of the gentle in her heart for me. And her eye never knew what it was to contradict her heart.

She is, thou sayest, *all mind*. So say I. But why shouldst thou imagine that such a mind as hers, meeting with such a one as mine, and, to dwell upon the word, *meeting* with an inclination in hers, should not propagate minds like her own?

Were I to take thy stupid advice, and marry, what a figure should I make in rakish annals! The lady in my power: yet not have *intended* to put herself in my power: declaring against love, and a rebel to it: so much open-eyed caution: no confidence in my honour: her family expecting the worst *hath* passed: herself seeming to expect that the worst *will* be attempted: [Priscilla Partington for that!] What! wouldst thou not have me act in character?

But why callest thou the lady *innocent?* And why sayest thou *she loves me?*

By *innocent*, with regard to me, and not taken as a general character, I must insist upon it she is *not* innocent. Can *she* be innocent, who, by wishing to shackle me in the prime and glory of my youth, with such a capacity as I have for noble mischief,* would make my perdition more certain, were I to break, as I doubt I should, the most solemn vow I could make? I say no man ought to take even a common oath, who thinks he cannot keep it. This

* See Letter XXXVIII., paragraph 4, of this volume.

is conscience! This is honour!—And when I think I can keep the marriage vow, then will it be time to marry.

No doubt of it, as thou sayest, the devils would rejoice in the fall of such a woman. But this is my confidence, that I shall have it in my power to marry when I will. And if I do her this *justice,* shall I not have a claim to her *gratitude?* And will she not think herself the obliged, rather than the obliger? Then let me tell thee, Belford, it is impossible so far to hurt the *morals of this lady,* as thou and thy brother varlets have hurt others of the sex, who now are casting about the town firebrands and double death. Take ye that thistle to mumble upon.

A SHORT interruption. I now resume.

That the morals of this lady cannot fail, is a consideration that will lessen the guilt on both sides. And if, when subdued, she knows but how to middle the matter between virtue and love, then will she be a wife for me: for already I am convinced that there is not a woman in the world that is love-proof and plot-proof, if she be not the person.

And now imagine (the charmer overcome) thou seest me sitting supinely cross-kneed, reclining on my sofa, the god of love dancing in my eyes, and rejoicing in every mantling feature; the sweet rogue, late such a proud rogue, wholly in my power, moving up slowly to me, at my beck, with heaving sighs, half-pronounced upbraidings from murmuring lips, her finger in her eye, and quickening her pace at my *Come hither, dearest!*

One hand stuck in my side, the other extended to encourage her bashful approach—*Kiss me, love!—sweet,* as Jack Belford says, *are the joys that come with willingness.*

She tenders her purple mouth [her corals lips will be purple then, Jack!]: sigh not so deeply, my beloved!—Happier hours await thy humble love, than did thy proud resistance.

Once more bent to my ardent lips the swanny glossiness of a neck late so stately.—

There's my precious!

Again!

Obliging loveliness!

Oh, my ever-blooming glory! I have tried thee enough. To-morrow's sun—

Then I rise, and fold to my almost-talking heart the throbbing-bosomed charmer.

And now shall thy humble pride confess its obligation to me!

To-morrow's sun—and then I disengage myself from the bashful passive, and stalk about the room—to-morrow's sun shall gild the altar at which my vows shall be paid thee!

Then, Jack, the rapture! then the darted sunbeams from her gladdened eye, drinking up, at one sip, the precious distillation from the pearl-dropt cheek! Then hands ardently folded, eyes seeming to pronounce, God bless my Lovelace! to supply the joy-locked tongue: her transports too strong, and expression too weak, to give utterance to her grateful meanings!—All—all the studies —all the studies of her future life vowed and devoted (when she can speak) to acknowledge and return the perpetuated obligation!

If I could bring my charmer to this, would it not be the eligible of eligibles?—Is it not worth trying for?—As I said, I can marry her when I will. She *can* be nobody's but mine, neither for shame, nor by choice, nor yet by address: for who, that knows my character, believes that the worst she dreads is *now* to be dreaded?

I have the highest opinion that man can have (thou knowest I have) of the merit and perfections of this admirable woman; of her virtue and honour too, although thou, in a former, art of opinion that she *may be overcome.** Am I not therefore obliged to go further, in order to contradict thee, and as I have often urged, to be *sure* that she is what I really think her to be, and, if I am ever to marry her, hope to find her?

Then this lady is a mistress of our passions: no one ever

* See Letter LXVI., paragraph 9, of this volume.

had to so much perfection the art of moving. This all her family know, and have equally feared and revered her for it. This I know too; and doubt not more and more to experience. How charmingly must this divine creature warble forth (if a proper occasion be given) her melodious elegiacs! —Infinite beauties are there in a weeping eye. I first taught the two nymphs below to distinguish the several accents of the *lamentable* in a new subject, and how admirably some, more than others, become their distresses.

But to return to thy objections—Thou wilt perhaps tell me, in the names of thy brethren, as well as in thy own name, that among all the objects of your respective attempts, there was not one of the rank and merit of my charming Miss Harlowe.

But let me ask, has it not been a constant maxim with us, that the greater the *merit* on the woman's side, the nobler the victory on the man's? And as to *rank*, sense of honour, sense of shame, pride of family, may make rifled rank get up, and shake itself to rights: and if anything come of it, such a one may suffer only in her pride, by being obliged to take up with a second-rate match instead of a first; and, as it may fall out, be the *happier*, as well as the more *useful*, for the misadventure; since (taken off of her public gaddings, and *domesticated* by her disgrace) she will have reason to think herself obliged to the man who has saved her from *further reproach*; while *her* fortune and alliance will lay an obligation upon *him*; and her past fall, if she have prudence and consciousness, will be his present and future security.

But a *poor* girl [such a one as my *Rosebud*, for instance] having no recals from education; being driven out of every family that pretends to reputation; persecuted most perhaps by such as have only kept their secret better; and having no refuge to fly to—the common, the stews, the street, is the fate of such a poor wretch; penury, want, and disease, her sure attendants; and an untimely end perhaps closes the miserable scene.

And will you not now all join to say, that it is more

manly to attack a lion than a sheep?—Thou knowest that I always illustrated my eagleship, by aiming at the noblest quarries; and by disdaining to make a stoop at wrens, phyl-tits,* and wag-tails.

The worst respecting myself, in the case before me, is that my triumph, when completed, will be so glorious a one, that I shall never be able to keep up to it. All my future attempts must be poor to this. I shall be as unhappy, after a while, from my reflections upon this conquest, as Don John of Austria was in his, on the renowned victory of Lepanto, when he found that none of his future achievements could keep pace with his early glory.

I am sensible that my pleas and my reasoning may be easily answered, and perhaps justly censured; but by whom censured? Not by any of the confraternity, whose constant course of life, even long before I became your general, to this hour, has justified what ye now in a fit of squeamishness, and through envy, condemn. Having, therefore, vindicated myself and my intentions to YOU, that is all I am at present concerned for.

Be convinced then, that *I* (according to *our* principles) am right, *thou* wrong; or, at least, be silent. But I *command thee to be convinced.* And in thy next be sure to tell me that thou art.

—o—

LETTER XCV.

Mr. Belford to Robert Lovelace, Esq.

Edgware, Thursday, May 4.

I KNOW that thou art so abandoned a man, that to give thee the best reasons in the world against what thou hast once resolved upon will be but acting the madman whom

* *Phyl-tits*, q.d. *Phyllis-tits*, in opposition to *Tom-tits.* It needs not now be observed, that Mr. Lovelace, in the wanton gaiety of his heart, often takes liberties of coining words and phrases in his letters to this his familiar friend. See his ludicrous reason for it in Letter XL., paragraph *antepenult.*

once we saw trying to buffet down a hurricane with his hat. I hope, however, that the lady's merit will still avail her with thee. But, if thou persistest; if thou wilt avenge thyself on this sweet lamb which thou hast singled out from a flock thou hatest, for the faults of the dogs who kept it: if thou art not to be moved by beauty, by learning, by prudence, by innocence, all shining out in one charming object; but she must fall, fall by the man whom she has chosen for her protector; I would not for a thousand worlds have thy crime to answer for.

Upon my faith, Lovelace, the subject sticks with me, notwithstanding I find I have not the honour of the lady's good opinion. And the more, when I reflect upon her father's brutal curse, and the villainous hard-heartedness of all her family. But, nevertheless, I should be desirous to know (*if thou wilt proceed*) by what gradations, arts, and contrivances thou effectest thy ingrateful purpose. And, O Lovelace, I conjure thee, if thou art a *man*, let not the specious devils thou hast brought her among be suffered to triumph over her; nor make her the victim of *unmanly artifices*. If she yield to *fair seductions*, if I may so express myself! if thou canst raise a weakness in her by love, or by arts not inhuman; I shall the less pity her: and shall then conclude that there is not a woman in the world who can resist a bold and resolute lover.

A messenger is just now arrived from my uncle. The mortification, it seems, is got to his knee; and the surgeons declare that he cannot live many days. He therefore sends for me directly, with these shocking words, *that I will come and close his eyes*. My servant or his must of necessity be in town every day on his case, or on other affairs; and one of them shall regularly attend you for any letter or commands. It will be charity to write to me as often as you can. For although I am likely to be a considerable gainer by the poor man's death, yet I cannot say that I at all love these scenes of death and the doctor so near me. The *doctor* and *death* I should have said; for that is the natural order, and generally speaking, the one is but the harbinger to the other.

If, therefore, you decline to oblige me, I shall think you are displeased with my freedom. But let me tell you, at the same time, that no man has a right to be displeased at freedoms taken with him for faults he is not ashamed to be guilty of.

J. BELFORD.

LETTER XCVI.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

I THANK you and Mr. Hickman for his letter, sent me with such kind expedition; and proceed to obey my dear menacing tyranness.

[She then gives the particulars of what passed between herself and Mr. Lovelace on Tuesday morning, in relation to his four friends, and to Miss Partington, pretty much to the same effect as in Mr. Lovelace's letter, No. XC. And then proceeds:]

He is constantly accusing me of over-scrupulousness. He says, 'I am always out of humour with him: that I could 'not have behaved more reservedly to Mr. Solmes: and 'that it is contrary to all his hopes and notions, that he 'should not, in so long a time, find himself able to inspire 'the person, whom he hoped so soon to have the honour 'to call his, with the least distinguishing tenderness for him 'beforehand.'

Silly and partial encroacher! not to know *to what to attribute the reserve I am forced to treat him with!* But his *pride* has eaten up his *prudence*. It is indeed a dirty low pride, that has swallowed up the *true* pride, which should have set him above the vanity that has over-run him.

Yet he pretends that he has no pride but in obliging me: and is always talking of his reverence and humility, and such sort of stuff: but of this I am sure that he has, as I observed the first time I saw him,* too much regard to his

* See vol. i. Letter III.

own person, greatly to value that of his wife, marry he whom he will: and I must be blind if I did not see that he is exceedingly vain of his external advantages, and of that address, which, if it has *any* merit in it to an outward eye, is perhaps owing more to his confidence than to anything else.

Have you not beheld the man, when I was your happy guest, as he walked to his chariot, looking about him, as if to observe what eyes his specious person and air had attracted?

But indeed we had some homely coxcombs as proud as if they had persons to be proud of; at the same time that it was apparent, that the pains they took about themselves but the more exposed their defects.

The man who is fond of being thought *more* or *better* than he *is*, as I have often observed, but provokes a scrutiny into his pretensions; and that generally produces contempt. For pride, as I believe I have heretofore said, is an infallible sign of weakness; of *something wrong in the head or heart, or in both.* He that exalts himself insults his neighbour; who is provoked to question in him even that merit, which, were he modest, would perhaps be allowed to be his due.

You will say that I am very grave: and so I am. Mr. Lovelace is extremely sunk in my opinion since Monday night: nor see I before me anything that can afford me a pleasing hope. For what, with a mind so *unequal as his*, can be my *best* hope?

I think I mentioned to you, in my former, that my clothes were brought me. You fluttered me so, that I am not sure I did. But I know I designed to mention that they were. They were brought me on Thursday; but neither my few guineas with them, nor any of my books, except a *Drexelius on Eternity*, the good old *Practice of Piety*, and a *Francis Spira*. My brother's wit, I suppose. He thinks he does well to point out death and despair to me. I wish for the one, and every now and then am on the brink of the other.

You will the less wonder at my being so very solemn, when, added to the above, and to my uncertain situation,

I tell you that they have sent me with these books a letter from my cousin Morden. It has set my heart against Mr. Lovelace. Against myself too. I send it enclosed. If you please, my dear, you may read it here:

Col. Morden to Miss Clarissa Harlowe.

Florence, April 13.

I AM extremely concerned to hear of a difference betwixt the rest of a family so near and dear to me, and *you* still dearer to me than any of the rest.

My cousin James has acquainted me with the offers you have had, and with your refusals. I wonder not at either. Such charming promises at so early an age as when I left England; and those promises, as I have often heard, so greatly exceeded, as well in your person as mind; how much must you be admired! how few must there be worthy of you!

Your parents, the most indulgent in the world, to a child the most deserving, have given way it seems to your refusal of several gentlemen. They have contented themselves at last to name one with *earnestness* to you, because of the address of another whom they cannot approve.

They had not reason, it seems, from your behaviour, to think you greatly averse: so they proceeded: perhaps too hastily for a delicacy like yours. But when all was fixed on their parts, and most extraordinary terms concluded in your favour; terms which abundantly show the gentleman's just value for you; you flew off with a warmth and vehemence little suited to that sweetness which gave grace to all your actions.

I know very little of either of the gentlemen: but of Mr. Lovelace I know more than of Mr. Solmes. I wish I could say more to his advantage than I can. As to every qualification but *one*, your brother owns there is no comparison. But that *one* outweighs all the rest together. It cannot be thought that Miss Clarissa Harlowe will dispense with MORALS in a husband.

What, my dearest cousin, shall I plead first to you on this occasion? Your duty, your interest, your temporal

and your eternal welfare, do, and may all, depend upon this single point, the *morality of a husband.* A woman who hath a wicked husband may find it difficult to *be* good, and out of her power to *do* good; and is therefore in a worse situation than the man can be in, who hath a bad wife. You preserve all your religious regards, I understand. I wonder not that you do. I should have wondered had you not. But what can you promise yourself, as to perseverance in them, with an immoral husband?

If your parents and you differ in sentiment on this important occasion, let me ask you, my dear cousin, who ought to give way? I own to you, that I should have thought there could not anywhere have been a more suitable match for you than with Mr. Lovelace, had he been a moral man. I should have very little to say against a man, of whose actions I am not to set up myself as a judge, did he not address my cousin. But, on this occasion, let me tell you, my dear Clarissa, that Mr. Lovelace cannot possibly deserve you. He *may* reform, you'll say: but he may *not.* Habit is not soon or easily shaken off. Libertines, who are libertines in defiance of talents, of superior lights, of conviction, hardly ever reform but by miracle, or by incapacity. Well do I know mine own sex. Well am I able to judge of the probability of the reformation of a licentious young man, who has not been fastened upon by sickness, by affliction, by calamity: who has a prosperous run of fortune before him: his spirits high: his will uncontrollable: the company he keeps, perhaps such as himself, confirming him in all his courses, assisting him in all his enterprises.

As to the other gentleman, suppose, my dear cousin, you do not like him at *present,* it is far from being unlikely that you will *hereafter:* perhaps the more for not liking him *now.* He can hardly sink *lower* in your opinion: he may *rise.* Very seldom is it that *high* expectations are so much as *tolerably* answered. How indeed *can* they, when a fine and extensive imagination carries its expectation infinitely beyond reality, in the highest of our sublunary enjoyments? A woman adorned with such an imagination sees no defect

in a favoured object (the less, if she be not conscious of any wilful fault in herself), till it is too late to rectify the mistakes occasioned by her generous credulity.

But suppose a person of your talents were to marry a man of inferior talents; who, in this case, can be so happy in *herself* as Miss Clarissa Harlowe? What delight do you take in doing good! How happily do you devote the several portions of the day to your own improvement, and to the advantage of all that move within your sphere!—And *then*, such is your taste, such are your acquirements in the politer studies, and in the politer amusements; such your excellence in all the different parts of economy fit for a young lady's inspection and practice, that your friends would wish you to be taken off as little as possible by regards that may be called merely *personal*.

But as to what may be the consequence respecting yourself, respecting a young lady of your talents, from the preference you are suspected to give to a libertine, I would have you, my dear cousin, consider what they may be. A mind so pure, to mingle with a mind impure! And will not such a man as this engross all your solitudes? Will he not perpetually fill you with anxieties for him and for yourself?—The divine and civil powers defied, and their sanctions broken through by him, on every not merely *accidental* but *meditated* occasion. To be agreeable to him, and to hope to preserve an interest in his affections, you must probably be obliged to abandon all your own laudable pursuits. You must enter into his pleasures and distastes. You must give up your own virtuous companions for his profligate ones—perhaps be forsaken by yours because of the scandal he daily gives. Can you hope, cousin, with such a man as this, to be *long* so good as you *now* are? If not, consider which of your present laudable delights you would choose to give up! which of his culpable ones to follow him in! How could you brook to go backward, instead of forward, in those duties which you now so exemplarily perform? and how do you know, if you once give way, where you shall be suffered, where you shall be *able*, to stop?

Your brother acknowledges that Mr. Solmes is not near so agreeable in person as Mr. Lovelace. But what is *person* with such a lady as I have the honour to be now writing to? He owns likewise that he has not the address of Mr. Lovelace: but what a *mere* personal advantage is a plausible *address* without *morals?* A woman had better take a husband whose manners she were to fashion, than to find them ready-fashioned to her hand, at the price of his morality; a price that is often paid for travelling accomplishments. Oh, my dear cousin, were you but with us here at Florence, or at Rome, or at Paris (where also I resided for many months), to see the gentlemen whose supposed *rough* English manners at setting out are to be polished, and what their improvements are in their return through the same places, you would infinitely prefer the man in his *first* stage to the same man in his *last.* You find the difference on their return—a fondness for foreign fashions, an attachment to foreign vices, a supercilious contempt of his own country and countrymen (himself more despicable than the most despicable of those he despises); these, with an unblushing effrontery, are too generally the attainments that concur to finish the travelled gentleman!

Mr. Lovelace, I know, deserves to have an exception made in his favour; for he is really a man of parts and learning: he was esteemed so both here and at Rome; and a fine person, and a generous turn of mind, gave him great advantages. But you need not be told, that a libertine man of sense does infinitely more mischief than a libertine of weak parts is able to do. And this I will tell you further, that it was Mr. Lovelace's own fault that he was not still more respected than he was among the *literati* here. There were, in short, some liberties in which he indulged himself, that endangered his person and his liberty; and made the best and most worthy of those who honoured him with their notice give him up, and his stay both at Florence and at Rome shorter than he designed.

This is all I choose to say of Mr. Lovelace. I had much rather have had reason to give him a quite contrary char-

acter. But as to rakes or libertines in general, I, who know them well, must be allowed, because of the mischiefs they have *always* in their *hearts*, and *too often* in their *power*, to do your sex, to add still a few more words upon this topic.

A libertine, my dear cousin, a *plotting*, an *intriguing* libertine, must be generally *remorseless—unjust* he must always be. The noble rule of doing to others what he would have done to himself is the first rule he breaks; and every day he breaks it, the oftener, the greater his triumph. He has great contempt for your sex. He believes no woman chaste, because he is a profligate. Every woman who *favours him confirms him* in his wicked incredulity. He is always plotting to extend the mischiefs he delights in. If a woman loves such a man, how can she bear the thought of dividing her interest in his affections with half the town, and that perhaps the dregs of it? Then so sensual!—How will a young lady of your delicacy bear with so sensual a man? a man who makes a jest of his vows? and who perhaps will break your spirit by the most unmanly insults. To be a libertine, at *setting out*, all compunction, all humanity, must be overcome. To *continue* to be a libertine, is to continue to be everything vile and inhuman. Prayers, tears, and the most abject submission, are but fuel to his pride: wagering perhaps with lewd companions, and, not improbably, with lewder women, upon instances which he boasts of to them of your patient sufferings, and broken spirit, and bringing them home to witness to both.

I write what I know *has* been.

I mention not fortunes squandered, estates mortgaged or sold, and posterity robbed—nor yet a multitude of other evils, too gross, too shocking, to be mentioned to a person of your delicacy.

All these, my dear cousin, to be shunned, all the evils I have named to be avoided; the power of doing all the good you have been accustomed to do, preserved, nay, increased, by the separate provision that will be made for you: your charming diversions, and exemplary employments, all maintained; and every good habit perpetuated: and all by *one* sacrifice, the fading pleasure of the eye! who would not

(since everything is not to be met with in one man, who would not), to preserve so many essentials, give up so light, so unpermanent a pleasure!

Weigh all these things, which I might insist upon to more advantage, did I think it needful to one of your prudence—weigh them well, my beloved cousin; and if it be not the will of your parents that you should continue single, resolve to oblige them; and let it not be said that the powers of fancy shall (as in many others of your sex) be too hard for your duty and your prudence. The less agreeable the man, the more obliging the compliance. Remember that he is a sober man—a man who has reputation to lose, and whose reputation therefore is a security for his good behaviour to you.

You have an opportunity offered you to give the highest instance that can be given of filial duty. Embrace it. It is worthy *of* you. It is expected *from* you; however, for your inclination sake, we may be sorry that you are called upon to give it. Let it be said that you have been able to lay an obligation upon your parents (a proud word, my cousin!), which you could not do, were it not laid *against* your inclination!—upon parents who have laid a thousand upon you: who are set upon this point: who will not give it up: who have given up many points to you, even of this very nature: and in their turn, for the sake of their own authority, as well as judgment, expect to be obliged.

I hope I shall soon, in person, congratulate you upon this your meritorious compliance. To settle and give up my trusteeship is one of the principal motives of my leaving these parts. I shall be glad to settle it to every one's satisfaction; to yours particularly.

If on my arrival I find a happy union, as formerly, reign in a family so dear to me, it will be an unspeakable pleasure to me; and I shall perhaps so dispose my affairs, as to be near you for ever.

I have written a very long letter, and will add no more, than that I am, with the greatest respect, my dearest cousin,

Your most affectionate and faithful servant,

WM. MORDEN.

I WILL suppose, my dear Miss Howe, that you have read my cousin's letter. It is now in vain to wish it had come sooner. But if it *had*, I might perhaps have been so rash as to give Mr. Lovelace the *fatal meeting*, as I little thought of going away with him.

But I should hardly have given him the *expectation* of so doing, *previous* to the meeting, which made him come prepared; and the revocation of which he so artfully made ineffectual.

Persecuted as I was, and little expecting so much condescension, as my aunt, to my great mortification, has told me (and you confirm) I should have met with, it is, however, hard to say what I should or should not have done as to *meeting him*, had it come in time: but this effect I verily believe it would have had—to have made me insist with all my might on going over, out of all their ways, to the kind writer of the instructive letter, and on making a father (a protector, as well as a friend) of a kinsman, who is one of my trustees. This, circumstanced as I was, would have been a natural, at least an unexceptionable protection!—But I *was to be* unhappy! and how it cuts me to the heart to think that I can already subscribe to my cousin's character of a libertine, so well drawn in the letter which I suppose you now to have read!

That a man of a character which ever was my abhorrence should fall to my lot!—But, depending on my own strength; having no reason to apprehend danger from headstrong and disgraceful impulses; I too little perhaps cast up my eyes to the Supreme Director: in whom, mistrusting myself, I ought to have placed my whole confidence—and the more, when I saw myself so perseveringly addressed by a man of this character.

Inexperience and presumption, with the help of a brother and sister who have low ends to answer in my disgrace, have been my *ruin!*—A hard word, my dear! but I repeat it upon deliberation: since, let the best happen which *now* can happen, my reputation is destroyed; a rake is my portion: and what that portion is my cousin Morden's letter has acquainted you.

Pray keep it by you till called for. I saw it not myself (having not the heart to inspect my trunks) till this morning. I would not for the world this man should see it; because it might occasion mischief between the most violent spirit, and the most settled brave one in the world, as my cousin's is said to be.

This letter was enclosed (opened) in a blank cover. Scorn and detest me as they will, I wonder that one line was not sent with it—were it but to have more particularly pointed the design of it, in the same generous spirit that sent me the spira.

The sealing of the cover was with black wax. I hope there is no new occasion in the family to give reason for black wax. But if there were, it would, to be sure, have been mentioned, and laid at my door—perhaps too justly!

I had begun a letter to my cousin; but laid it by, because of the uncertainty of my situation, and expecting every day for several days past to be at a greater certainty. You bid me write to him some time ago, you know. Then it was I began it: for I have great pleasure in obeying you in all I may. So I ought to have; for you are the only friend left me. And, moreover, you generally honour me with your own observance of the advice I take the liberty to offer you: for I pretend to say I give better advice than I have taken. And so I had need. For I know not how it comes about, but I am, in my own opinion, a poor lost creature: and yet cannot charge myself with one criminal or faulty inclination. Do you know, my dear, how this can be?

Yet I can tell you *how*, I believe—one devious step at setting out!—that must be it:—which pursued, has led me so far out of my path, that I am in a wilderness of doubt and error; and never, never, shall find my way out of it: for, although but one pace awry at first, it has led me hundreds and hundreds of miles out of my path: and the poor estray has not one kind friend, nor has met with one directing passenger, to help her to recover it.

But I, presumptuous creature! must rely so much upon my own knowledge of the right path!—little apprehending

that an *ignus fatuus* with its false fires (and yet I had heard enough of such) would arise to mislead me! And now, in the midst of fens and quagmires, it plays around me, and around me, throwing me back again, whenever I think myself in the right track. But there is one common point, in which all shall meet, err widely as they may. In that I shall be laid quietly down at last: and then will all my calamities be at an end.

But how I stray again; stray from my intention! I would only have said, that I had begun a letter to my cousin Morden some time ago: but that now I can never end it. You will believe I cannot: for how shall I tell him that all his compliments are misbestowed? that all his advice is thrown away? all his warnings vain? and that even my highest expectation is to be the wife of that free-liver, whom he so pathetically warns me to shun?

Let me, however, have your prayers joined with my own (my fate depending, as it seems, upon the *lips of such a man*), 'that, whatever shall be my destiny, that dreadful 'part of my father's malediction, that I may be punished 'by the man in whom he supposes I put my confidence, 'may not take place! that this for *Mr. Lovelace's* own sake, 'and for the sake of *human nature*, may not be! or, if it 'be necessary, in support of the parental authority, that I 'should be punished by *him*, that it may not be by his '*premeditated* or *wilful* baseness; but that I may be able 'to acquit his *intention*, if not his *action!*' Otherwise, my fault will appear to be doubled in the eye of the event-judging world. And yet, methinks, I would be glad that the unkindness of my father and uncles, whose hearts have already been too much wounded by my error, may be justified in every article, excepting in this heavy curse: and that my father will be pleased to withdraw that before it be generally known: at least that most dreadful part of it which regards futurity!

I must lay down my pen. I must brood over these reflections. Once more, before I close my cousin's letter, I will peruse it. And then I shall have it by heart.

LETTER XCVII.

Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe.

Sunday Night, May 7.

WHEN you reflect upon my unhappy situation, which is attended with so many indelicate and even shocking circumstances, some of which my pride will not let me think of with patience; all aggravated by the contents of my cousin's affecting letter; you will not wonder that the vapourishness which has laid hold of my heart should rise to my pen. And yet it would be more kind, more friendly in me, to conceal from *you*, who take such a generous interest in my concerns, that worst part of my griefs, which communication and complaint cannot relieve.

But to whom can I unbosom myself but to you: when the man who ought to be my protector, as he has brought upon me all my distresses, adds to my apprehensions; when I have not even a servant on whose fidelity I can rely, or to whom I can break my griefs as they arise; and when his bountiful temper and gay heart attach every one to him; and I am but a *cipher*, to give *him* significance, and *myself* pain?—These griefs, therefore, do what I can, will sometimes burst into tears; and these mingling with my ink, will blot my paper. And I know you will not grudge me the temporary relief.

But I shall go on in the strain I left off with in my last when I intended rather to apologise for my melancholy. But let what I have above written, once for all, be my apology. My misfortunes have given you a call to discharge the noblest offices of the friendship we have vowed to each other, in advice and consolation; and it would be an injury to it, and to you, to suppose it needed even that call.

[She then tells Miss Howe that now her clothes are come, Mr. Lovelace is continually teasing her to go abroad with him in a coach, attended by whom she pleases of her own sex, either for the air, or to the public diversions.

She gives the particulars of a conversation that has passed between them on that subject, and his several proposals. But takes notice that he says not the least word of the solemnity which he so much pressed for before they came to town; and which, as she observes, was necessary to give propriety to his proposals.]

Now, my dear, *says she*, I cannot bear the life I live. I would be glad at my heart to be out of his reach. If I were, he should soon *find the difference*. If I must be humbled, it had better be by those to whom I owe duty, than by him. My aunt writes in her letter,* that SHE dare not propose anything in my favour. You tell me, that, upon inquiry, you find† that had I not been unhappily seduced away, a change of measures was actually resolved upon; and that my mother, particularly, was determined to exert herself for the restoration of the family peace; and, in order to succeed the better, had thoughts of trying to engage my uncle Harlowe in her party.

Let me build on these foundations. I can but try, my dear. It is my duty to try all *probable* methods to restore the poor outcast to favour. And who knows but that once indulgent uncle, who has very great weight in the family, may be induced to interpose in my behalf? I will give up all right and title to my grandfather's devises and bequests, with all my heart and soul, to whom they please, in order to make my proposal palatable to my brother. And that my surrender may be effectual, I will engage never to marry.

What think you, my dear, of this expedient? Surely, they cannot resolve to renounce me for ever. If they look with impartial eyes upon what has happened, they will have something to blame *themselves* for, as well as *me*.

I presume that you will be of opinion that this expedient is worth trying. But here is my difficulty: If I should write, my hard-hearted brother has so strongly confederated them all against me, that my letter would be handed about from one to another, till he had hardened every one to refuse

* See Letter LXVII. in this vol. † Ibid., Letter XXIII.

my request; whereas could my uncle be engaged to espouse my cause, as from *himself*, I should have some hope, as I presume to think he would soon have my mother and my aunt of his party.

What, therefore, I am thinking of, is this—'Suppose 'Mr. Hickman, whose good character has gained him every-'body's respect, should put himself in my uncle Harlowe's 'way? And (as if from your knowledge of the state of 'things between Mr. Lovelace and me) assure him not only 'of the above particulars, but that I am under no obligations 'that shall hinder me from taking his directions?'

I submit the whole to your consideration, whether to pursue it at all, or in what manner. But if it *be* pursued, and if my uncle refuse to interest himself in my favour upon Mr. Hickman's application as from you (for so, for obvious reasons, it must be put), I can then have no hope; and my next step, in the mind I am in, shall be to throw myself into the protection of the ladies of his family.

It were an impiety to adopt the following lines, because it would be throwing upon the decrees of Providence a fault too much my own. But often do I revolve them, for the sake of the general similitude which they bear to my unhappy, yet undesigned error.

> To you, great gods! I make my last appeal:
> Or clear my virtues, or my crimes reveal.
> If wandering in the maze of life I run,
> And backward tread the steps I sought to shun,
> Impute my error to your own decree:
> My FEET are guilty: but my HEART is free.

[The lady dates again on Monday, to let Miss Howe know that Mr. Lovelace, on observing her uneasiness, had introduced to her Mr. Mennell, Mrs. Fretchville's kinsman, who managed all her affairs. She calls him a young officer of sense and politeness, who gave her an account of the house and furniture, to the same effect that Mr. Lovelace had done before;* as also of the melancholy way Mrs. Fretchville is in.

* See Letter LXXXI. in this volume.

She tells Miss Howe how extremely urgent Mr. Lovelace was with the gentleman, to get his spouse (as he now always calls her before company) a sight of the house: and that Mr. Mennell undertook that very afternoon to show her all of it, except the apartment Mrs. Fretchville should be in when she went. But that she chose not to take another step till she knew how she approved of her scheme to have her uncle sounded, and with what success, if tried, it would be attended.

Mr. Lovelace, in his humorous way, gives his friend an account of the lady's peevishness and dejection, on receiving a letter with her clothes. He regrets that he has lost her confidence; which he attributes to his bringing her into the company of his four companions. Yet he thinks he must excuse them, and censure her for over-niceness; for that he never saw men behave better, at least not *them*. Mentioning his introducing Mr. Mennell to her,]

Now, Jack, *says he*, was it not very kind of Mr. Mennell [*Captain* Mennell I sometimes called him; for among the military men there is no such officer, thou knowest, as a *lieutenant*, or an *ensign*—was it not very kind in him] to come along with me so readily as he did, to satisfy my beloved about the vapourish lady in the house?

But who is Captain Mennell? methinks thou askest: I never heard of such a man as Captain Mennell.

Very likely. But knowest thou not young Newcomb, honest Doleman's nephew?

O ho! Is it he?

It is. And I have changed his name by virtue of my own single authority. Knowest thou not, that I am a great name-father? Preferment I bestow, both military and civil. I give estates, and take them away at my pleasure. Quality too I create. And by a still more valuable prerogative, I *degrade* by virtue of my own imperial will, without any other act of forfeiture than for my own convenience. What a poor thing is a monarch to me!

But Mennell, now he has seen this angel of a woman, has qualms; that's the devil!—I shall have enough to do

to keep him right. But it is the less wonder that *he* should stagger, when a few hours' conversation with the same lady could make four much more hardened varlets find *hearts*—only that I am confident that I shall at least reward her virtue, if her virtue overcome me, or I should find it impossible to persevere—for at times I have confounded qualms myself. But say not a word of them to the confraternity: nor laugh at me for them thyself.

In another letter, dated Monday night, he writes as follows:

This perverse lady keeps me at such distance, that I am sure something is going on between her and Miss Howe, notwithstanding the prohibition from Mrs. Howe to both: and as I have thought it some degree of merit in myself to punish others for their transgressions, I am of opinion that both these girls are punishable for their breach of parental injunctions. And as to their letter-carrier, I have been inquiring into his way of living; and finding him to be a common poacher, a deer stealer, and warren robber, who, under pretence of higgling, deals with a set of customers, who constantly take all he brings, whether fish, fowl, or venison, I hold myself justified (since Wilson's conveyance must at present be sacred) to have him stripped and robbed, and what money he has about him given to the poor; since, if I take not money as well as letters, I shall be suspected.

To serve one's self, and punish a villain at the same time, is serving public and private. The law was not made for such a man as me. And I *must* come at correspondences so disobediently carried on.

But on second thoughts, if I could find out that the dear creature carried any of her letters in her pockets, I can get her to a play or to a concert, and she may have the misfortune to lose her pockets.

But how shall I find this out; since her Dorcas knows no more of her dressing and undressing than her Lovelace? For she is dressed for the day before she appears even to her servant. Vilely suspicious! Upon my soul, Jack, a suspicious temper is a punishable temper. If a woman suspects a rogue in an honest man, is it not enough to make the honest man who knows it a rogue?

But as to her pockets, I think my mind hankers after them, as the less mischievous attempt. But they cannot hold all the letters that I should wish to see. And yet a woman's pockets are half as deep as she is high. Tied round the sweet *levities*, I presume, as ballast-bags, lest the wind, as they move with full sail, from whale-ribbed canvas, should blow away the gypsies.

[He then, in apprehension that something is meditating between the two ladies, or that something may be set on foot to get Miss Harlowe out of his hands, relates several of his contrivances, and boasts of his instructions given in writing to Dorcas, and to his servant Will. Summers; and says that he has provided against every possible accident, even to *bring her back* if she should escape, or in case she should go abroad, and then *refuse to return*; and hopes so to manage, as that, should he make an attempt, whether he succeeded in it or not, he may have a pretence to detain her.]

He then proceeds as follows:

I have ordered Dorcas to cultivate by all means her lady's favour; to lament her incapacity as to writing and reading; to show letters to her lady, as from pretended country relations; to beg her advice how to answer them, and to get them answered; and to be always aiming at scrawling with a pen, lest inky fingers should give suspicion. I have moreover given the wench an ivory-leafed pocket-book, with a silver pencil, that she may make memoranda on occasion.

And let me tell thee that the lady has already (at Mrs. Sinclair's motion) removed her clothes out of the trunks they came in, into an ample mahogany repository, where they will lie at full length, and which has drawers in it for linen. A repository, that used to hold the richest suits which some of the nymphs put on, when they are to be dressed out, to captivate, or to ape quality. For many a countess, thou knowest, has our mother equipped; nay, two or three duchesses, who live upon *quality-terms* with their lords. But this to such as will come up to her price, and can make an appearance like quality themselves on the occasion: for the reputation of persons of birth must not lie at the mercy of every *under-degreed* sinner.

A master-key, which will open every lock in this chest, is put into Dorcas's hands; and she is to take care, when she searches for papers, before she removes anything, to observe how it lies, that she may replace all to a hair. Sally and Polly can occasionally help to transcribe. Slow and sure with such an Argus-eyed charmer must be all my movements.

It is impossible that one so young and so inexperienced as she is can have all her caution from herself; the behaviour of the women so unexceptionable; no revellings, no company ever admitted into this inner-house; all genteel, quiet, and easy in it; the nymphs well-bred, and well-read; her first disgusts to the old one got over.—It must be Miss Howe, therefore [who once was in danger of being taken in by one of our class, by honest Sir George Colmar, as thou hast heard], that makes my progress difficult.

Thou seest, Belford, by the above *precautionaries*, that I forget nothing. As the song says, it is not to be imagined

> On what slight strings
> Depend those things
> On which men build their glory!

So far, so good. I shall never rest till I have discovered, in the first place, where the dear creature puts her letters; and in the next till I have got her to a play, to a concert, or to take an airing with me out of town for a day or two.

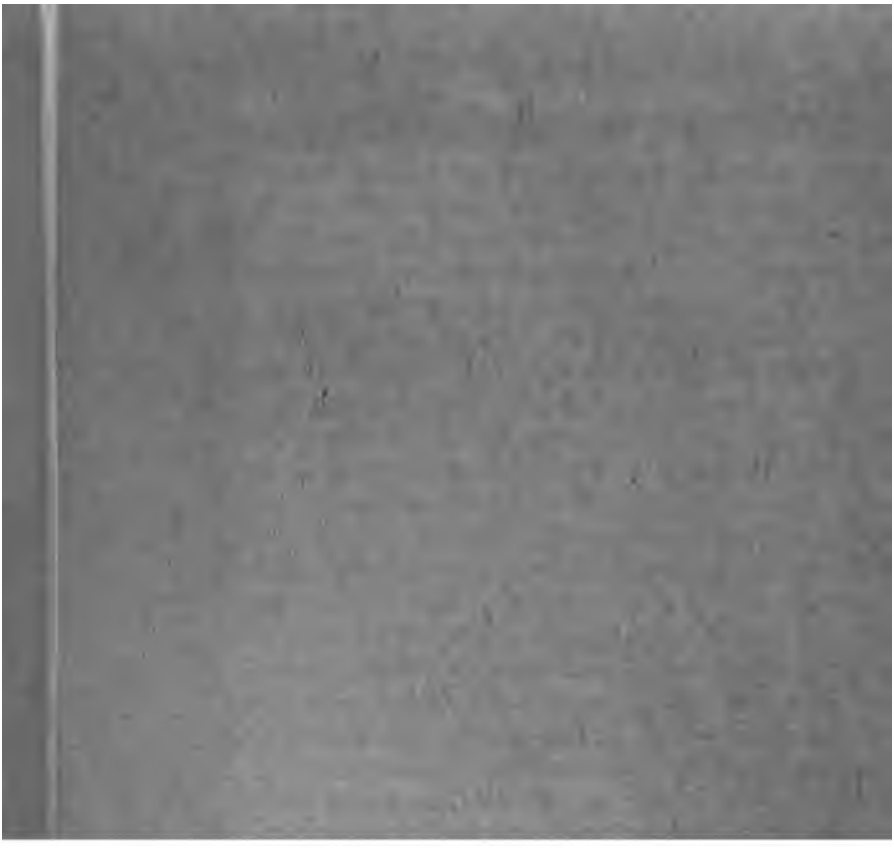
I GAVE thee just now some of *my* contrivances. Dorcas, who is ever attentive to all her lady's motions, has given me some instances of her *mistress's* precautions. She wafers her letters, it seems, in two places; pricks the wafers; and then seals upon them. No doubt but the same care is taken with regard to those brought to her, for she always examines the seals of the latter before she opens them.

I must, I must come at them. This difficulty augments my curiosity. Strange, so much as she writes, and at all hours, that not one sleepy or forgetful moment has offered in our favour!

A fair contention, thou seest: nor plead thou in her favour her *youth*, her *beauty*, her *family*, her *fortune*, CREDULITY, she has none; and with regard to her TENDER YEARS, am I not a *young fellow* myself? As to BEAUTY; pr'ythee,

Jack, do thou, to spare my modesty, make a comparison between my Clarissa for a *woman*, and thy Lovelace for a *man*. For her FAMILY; that was not known to its country a century ago: and I hate them all but her. Have I not cause?—For her FORTUNE; fortune, thou knowest, was ever a *stimulus* with me; and this for reasons not ignoble. Do not girls of fortune adorn themselves on purpose to engage our attention? Seek they not to draw us into their snares? Depend they not, generally, on their *fortunes*, in the views they have upon us, more than on their *merits*? Shall we deprive them of the benefit of their *principal* dependence? Can I, in particular, marry *every girl* who wishes to obtain my notice? If, therefore, in support of the libertine principles for which none of the sweet rogues hate us, a woman of fortune is brought to yield homage to her emperor, and any consequences attend the *subjugation*, is not such a one shielded by her fortune, as well from insult and contempt, as from indigence—all, then, that admits of debate between my beloved and me is only this—which of the two has more *wit*, more *circumspection*—and that remains to be tried.

A sad life, however, this life of doubt and suspense, for the poor lady to live, as well as for me; that is to say, if she be not *naturally* jealous—if she be, her uneasiness is constitutional, and she cannot help it; nor will it, in that case, hurt her. For a suspicious temper will *make* occasions for doubt, if none were to offer to its hand. My fair one therefore, if naturally suspicious, is obliged to me for saving her the trouble of *studying* for these occasions—but, after all, the plainest paths in our journeys through life are the safest and best I believe, although it is not given me to choose them; I am not, however, singular in the pursuit of the more intricate paths; since there are thousands, and ten thousands, who had rather fish in troubled waters than in smooth.

END OF VOL. II.

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